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A Reformed Weekly

JANUARY 3, 1992/47th year of publication/No. 2288

Mexican Catholic governor acts to help evicted Protestants

Marian Van Til

SALTILLO, Mexico — Mexico has some hot weather, but the religious climate resulting from strife between the country's centuries-long Catholic tradition and the "up-start" Protestants has become even hotter. Amidst that heat Protestants may now feel some cool breezes.

"In an unprecedented show of support for a beleaguered Protestant community in southern Mexico, the governor of the State of Chiapas has approved the issuing of arrest warrants for [Catholic] town officials responsible for evicting 25 Presbyterian families last September," reports Edgardo Moreno of the Christian news service News Network International (NNI).

Roman Catholicism has dominated Mexico ever since the Spaniards arrived in the 16th century, but the Mexican version of Catholicism has become simply tradition for many, and for scores of peasants it is full of superstition. Thus, evangelical Protestants (especially Charismatics) have been making substantial inroads. That has resulted in a questioning of the Catholic Church and in the defection of many to Protestant churches.

Defending the status quo

Alarmed by that situation, many Catholic Church leaders as well as government leaders, who are generally Catholic, have for months been intensifying a crack-down on Protestant activities; violence has erupted periodically.

So to have a Mexican state governor side with Protestants is an unusual — and for them, encouraging — occurrence. But that action probably didn't come "out of the blue," according to observers. NNI's Moreno says it is "believed to be tied to Mexican President Salinas de Gortari's Dec. 10 speech in which he laid out proposed amendments to the constitution regarding religious liberty."

Slow road forged toward equality

The 25 Presbyterian families had been evicted from the Chiapas communities of Saltillo and Las

See **MEXICAN** -- p. 2

Descendant of a forgotten giant

Photo: Bert Witvoet

Left: Donna Spurgeon Lunn: Next to her, former president of the Ontario Farm Women's Association. Rennie Feddema of Strairoy, Ont.

At the recent convention of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario I came across a direct descendant of Charles Spurgeon, Donna Lunn, whose birth name is Spurgeon. This interested me especially as we had run an article on Charles Haddon Spurgeon in the Nov. 8, 1991, issue of C.C.

Donna is president of the Ontario Farm Women's Association. She said that the Spurgeons originally came from the Netherlands, where their name had been Spriggen. Another point of interest is that Charles Spurgeon had a twin brother and that having twins is a characteristic of the Spurgeon family down the years, she said. Donna Lunn has two cousins who are identical twins.

Bert Witvoet

Farmers must talk to city folk, says convention

Photo: Bert Witvoet

The honourable Elmer Buchanan said that farmers are not getting a fair price. CFFO President Henry Aukema looks on.

Bert Witvoet

GUELPH, Ont. — There is a crisis in farming. Farmers feel misunderstood by urbanites and consumers. It's time to focus on building bridges between town and country. These were the main themes of the 1991 convention of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO) held on Dec. 5.

A United Church pastor with a degree in agriculture addressed the three themes in a morning speech entitled "Bridge over Troubled Waters." Rev. Peter McKellar of Mitchell, Ont., made reference to the debt load which many young farmers carry and to international pressures on the supply managment system which in certain sectors of farming in Canada has until now assured a sufficient income and has prevented over-production.

Food and farming

Part of the problem lies in the fact that non-farmers and the media have a wrong picture of farming, said McKellar. "How can we communicate our situation to ordinary Canadians and make them understand the problems of food production?"

According to McKellar, people growing up in cities no longer see any connection between the food they eat and farming. "One teacher is cooking applesauce with her children so that they realize that applesauce is made from apples," he said. He made reference to a survey which indicated that 46 per cent of people surveyed did not see a connection between white bread and wheat. "Everything comes to them wrapped in packages and cans."

McKellar felt the church was able to play a role in bringing urbanites and country people together. He knew of a country church that had invited members of a city church to visit a farm and to come to a meeting afterwards at the church.

During a luncheon speech, the Ontario Minister of Agriculture and Food, Elmer Buchanan, congratulated the CFFO on focusing on the problem of public awareness. Farmers are not getting a fair share of the food dollar, he pointed out, and people should be aware of that.

When a corn product went up by 61 per cent, retailers got 81 per cent of that increase, he said. Yet the farm price for corn dropped 13 per cent. "In some cases, if farmers were to give their product away, it would not make a difference in the price of a product."

Buchanan also pointed out that international competition puts pressure on farming in Canada. Other countries may have lower overhead costs, freer labour laws and fewer environmental restrictions. "It's important to get a good deal in the GATT negotiations," he said. "Twelve thousand farmers depend on supply management."

Keep on paddling

CFFO President Henry Aukema told the conference in this president's address that it is important to balance economic pressures with concern for the land. He pointed out that internationally there is no such thing as a level playing field and that our social structures may have to go.

He gave his audience a message of hope when he told them an anecdote of two frogs which had jumped into a pail of cream. The two could not get out because there was nothing to jump off from. One of the frogs gave up and drowned. The other frog paddled and paddled until morning, when he climbed on top of the butter and jumped out.

Thinkbit:

On the road to sanctification, it's much easier to act *yourself into a new way of thinking than to* think *yourself into a new way of acting.*

Lutheran pastor Cyril Hurnyak in a sermon on bearing spiritual fruit.

In this issue:

Salvation encompasses the whole cosmos, not just us. See "Freddy the Frog and the re-defining of redemption" . . . . . p. 10-11

Bill Fledderus tells the story of an atypical refugee sponsorship. . . . . p. 10-11

Say goodbye to the original crew of the spaceship *Enterprise*. See "Cinema summaries"; David Baerwald's music strongly critiques North American society. See music review. . . . . p. 7

News

Church committee calls for urgent reform of Canadian justice system

Bert Witvoet

BURLINGTON, Ont. — A committee of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada (CCRCC) is calling for drastic reform of the Canadian justice system. In its report called "Criminal Justice in Canada: a Case for Reform" the Committee for Contact with the Government (a part of CCRCC) is telling Canadians and their government that the criminal justice system is "cold and dehumanizing" and is harsh on Natives and women.

The main charge leveled against the justice system is that it is too impersonal and injures rather than restores human relationships. "Accused persons are charged with offenses against 'the state,' in consequence of which too little attention is paid to the human dimension of correction," says the report.

According to the committee, "crime and injustice are not, in fact, impersonal in nature. They violate human community and damage real persons." The committee believes that the justice system should involve the victims and the community and should focus on correction of wrongs done and on restoration of damaged relationships.

Five recommendations

"While punishment and deterrence are also elements of biblical justice (Deut. 19: 20), the emphasis of Scripture is clearly on setting limits and proportionality," says the report. The report also criticizes the Canadian justice system for the excessive use of incarceration.

In a section called "Advice to Government" the committee makes five recommendations: 1) emphasize community involvement in the criminal system; 2) allow Native peoples to deal with Native offenders in their own communities; 3) accelerate the establishment of regionally based correctional facilities for women; 4) develop a system which allows for the expression of moral condemnation, seeks restitution, forgiveness, victim involvement and reconciliation as well as provides deterrence and protection; and 5) take seriously the Daubney committee report of 1988.

"Criminal Justice in Canada: a Case for Reform" (pamphlet or full report) is available free of charge from: Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada: 3475 Mainway, P.O. Box 5070, Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8.

Mexican Catholics, Protestants face off

...continued from p. 1

Margaritas on Sept. 10, for refusing to renounce their kind of faith and swear allegiance to the Catholic Church. Edgardo Moreno reports that protests lodged by the Presbyterians at the time with Chiapas state governor Patrocinio Gonzales' office were ignored until last month when Gonzales himself met on Dec. 7, with Catholic, Protestant and civic leaders to discuss the proposed constitutional amendments regarding religious freedom.

Representatives of Mexican Presbyterians told the governor that while they generally agreed with the proposed amendments, they were concerned that constitutional religious guarantees already in place are being ignored by Mexican authorities. "Chiapas has a long history of religiously motivated evictions," explains Moreno, "with some 24,000 Protestant believers sent into exile or persecuted in one form or another since the mid-1960s."

In response, Governor Gonzales personally met with Protestant leaders and toured the Presbyterian community in mid-December. Gonzales then met with the local officials who forced the eviction. He urged them to unconditionally allow the families to return home. No agreement was reached at that time, but Governor Gonzales gave the officials 72 hours to resolve the matter or face criminal charges.

Hopeful indications

But when the 72-hour deadline expired on Dec. 15, those civic leaders had not budged. "The next day," reports Moreno, "Governor Gonzales issued an order to begin legal proceedings against local officials responsible for the evictions."

Jorge Lopez Perez, president of the Presbyterian Church of Mexico, told NNI that he thinks state government leaders want to "resolve these problems and bring an end to this disorder. Nevertheless, lower level aides to the governor fail to take action when protests are lodged by individual believers. But in this case we hope the governor will act decisively to bring justice to our brethren."

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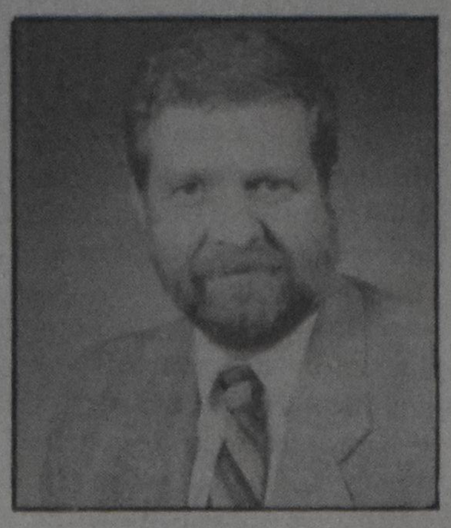
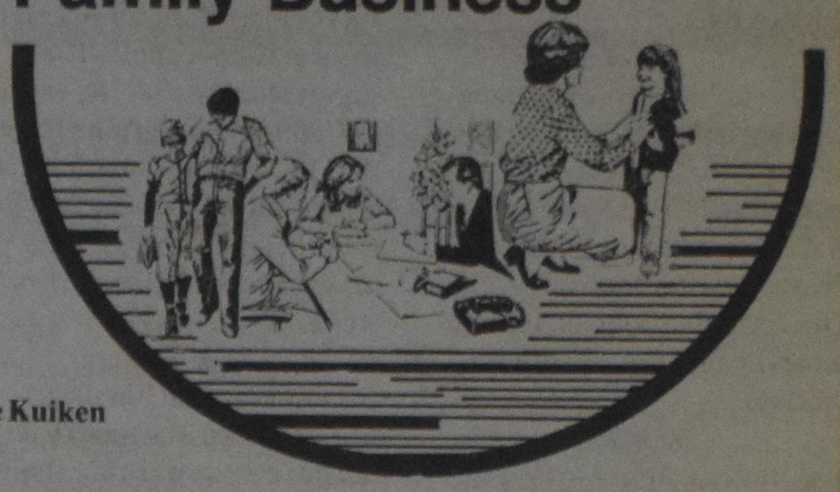


Jake Kuiken

Family Business



Do *you* know any 'welfare bums'?

My first job as a social worker involved doing intake in a public assistance program, i.e., welfare service of last resort. Basically it meant interviewing all the first-time applicants for short-term financial assistance and those who had not used the program for at least a year. Consequently, anyone who had lived in Calgary for at least 12 months in the last two years and was without adequate food, clothing, shelter or medical care came through my office in order to qualify for a financial benefit. I don't know how many different people I interviewed during the year I spent in that position, but quite likely well in excess of a couple or three thousand.

For a fresh-out-of-college and somewhat naive young person it was quite an experience. I learned a lot during that one year about what I used to think was the "other side" of life. In fact, with a considerable degree of certainty I can say that there was little I didn't encounter in some form during that year.

One of the things that used to happen frequently then, and which occurred again rather recently, involved someone who was upset about all of the people "ripping-off" the welfare system because of laziness and a general unwillingness to "get out and find a job." It's part of a larger public perception about a class of people who are sometimes called the "unworthy or undeserving poor."

Hearsay not acceptable

There are at least two points that need to be made about this. First, it didn't take this new social worker long to begin challenging the statements by asking for the name of the person who was taking money without being qualified. At the same time I pointed out that the failure to report someone who might be committing fraud was at best a failure to be a good citizen and quite possibly aiding a cover-up of what might be considered a criminal act.

After 25 years I'm still waiting for the first name; and I don't hear the same persons repeating such comments very often.

Now that doesn't mean there aren't people who abuse the welfare system. There are. I've seen it happen. But their numbers are probably no greater than those who cheat on their taxes, an equally dishonourable thing.

The second point is the negative public attitude many of us have towards those who find it necessary to claim one of the benefits of citizenship, namely the entitlement to food, clothing and shelter at a reasonable standard. Somewhat aside, a recent study published by the National Council of Welfare revealed that public assistance rates in Canada are grossly inadequate and are on the decline in many provinces. In most cases the total amount of welfare benefits is somewhere between 60 and 70 per cent of the official poverty-level figures. And that gets back to the attitude.

The history of this attitude goes back a long way, centuries in fact. Through much of the 17th, to the end of the 19th century the poor were variously relegated to "houses of correction," "workhouses" and "poorhouses" — institutions most of us would now consider untenable for anyone. Even in parts of Canada as recently as a hundred years ago, the poor ended up in jail for no other reason than the fact that they were poor.

Work should be the best option

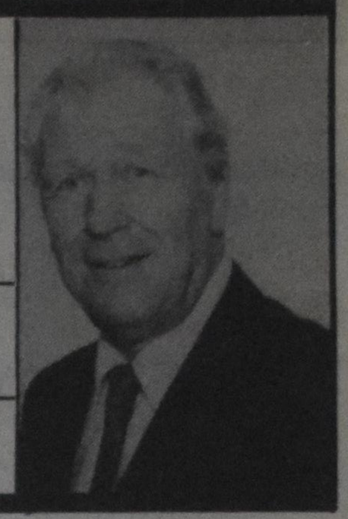
An English Royal Commission in 1834 confirmed a principle for public assistance programs that is still operative in Canada today and certainly very much a part of the public attitude towards welfare recipients. The Commissioners wrote: "Every penny bestowed that tends to render the condition of the pauper more eligible than that of the independent laborer is a bounty on indolence and vice." Today it is sometimes called the "principle of least eligibility" and means simply that the lowest paying job should provide more money than is available from a welfare program.

According to National Council of Welfare figures, a single person in Alberta would have received a total welfare benefit of $4,903 for 1990, or approximately 35 per cent of the $9,252 poverty-level income figure. It's also noteworthy that the minimum wage in Alberta would have produced an income of under $9,000 during the same year.

The information compiled by the National Council of Welfare makes clear that provincial governments in Canada still practise the same antiquated beliefs. At a time when there are well over a million Canadians who are unable to find a job that gives them and their families the necessities of life, it's time to think about and act to change these outdated ideas about our mutual responsibilities for each other. A new social charter as part of Canada's Constitution may be a better option than maintaining the practises of the 17th century.

Jake Kuiken lives and works in Calgary where he's a registered social worker and the Secretary of the Alberta Association of Social Workers.

Pressreview



Carl D. Tuyl

'T-is the season to be kind. So I'll begin with quoting Graeme Decarie in the *Montreal Gazette* who says, "Let's say something nice about politicians." On the top of my list is Senator Douglas Everett who has returned his estimated $64,000 salary every year for the past four years. The Senator says that he does not deserve the money because he does not perform as much Senate work as he once did. He now attends only half the sittings. Let's hear it for Senator Everett.

★ ★ ★

Now let's try to do the same for Monsieur. It's a bit harder, but nevertheless he is one true defender of Canadian unity, and for that a tip of the hat to Prime Minister Mulroney. There, that's about all the kind things I could squeeze out for the day.

★ ★ ★

Ottawa is abuzz with rumours about a shake-up in the Prime Minister's office. It seems that the current organization rattles like a car with worn-out bearings.

★ ★ ★

The premiers are priming Monsieur's pump on the economy. They want an influx of spending money by freeing RRSPs for home buying. Bourassa is saying something with his absence; I don't know quite what. It's sure the message is not in keeping with the season. Frere Jacques Parizeau wasn't impressed, of course. There is a columnist in the *Financial Post*, Diane Francis, who certainly has a novel, but somewhat extreme idea. She wrote that Parizeau and "his band of highwaymen would be deposed and arrested" should Quebec leave Canada. The *Financial Post* is a paper that is not given to drooling with liberal schemes.

★ ★ ★

Right on the front page of the *Toronto Star* is a picture of the guy who will be throwing balls for the Blue Jays two times a week during the summer season for more than five million smackeroos per year. Most of his appearances will be in a city where people sleep in bus shelters. Something is out of balance there.

★ ★ ★

And what's with Chretien? Either he wants to self-destruct or he thinks that he can set back the clock. He has decided to contest the next federal seat in Shawinigan. The riding, which Chretien owned for 23 years from 1963 till 1986, is currently held by a Conservative. It will have a popular Bloc Quebecois Candidate. Chretien himself said that he was not one to bow out to avoid fights. Go get 'm, Jean.

★ ★ ★

Lots of good things can be said about Canadians, but honesty is apparently not quite at the top of the list. The *Vancouver Sun* obtained the results of a Canadian Customs survey after filing an Access to Information request. The survey showed that 16 per cent of Canadians returning from the U.S. by land are smugglers. Shame, double shame. Yet on the other hand there is this saying about casting the first stone....

★ ★ ★

Don't say that Finance Minister Don Mazankowski did not give us warning. This is what he said: "Canadians should brace themselves for more spending cuts in the February budget but shouldn't worry about tax increases. The old good news/bad news routine.

★ ★ ★

A friend of mine who is a bit of a globe trotter said that she spotted this sign in a Vienna hotel: "In case of fire do your utmost to alarm the hotel porter." Thoughtful, eh? And while we are on the subject of signs, how about this one on the door of a marriage license office: "Out for lunch — think it over!"

★ ★ ★

Three cheers for the baby boomers. They're doing their own booming. Canadian population growth hit a 15-year high in 1990. Altogether there are now 26.8 million Canadians. The Finance Minister is licking his lips in delight.

★ ★ ★

The government doesn't have much luck with its task forces. The unity panel is limping around like a robin that lost its way to the South, and the study committee on reproductive technology is embroiled in so many internal squabbles that the government had to fire four of the members.

★ ★ ★

'Fess up: How many New Year's resolutions have you broken already?

★ ★ ★

If you're old as I am and sneaked into a movie when you were young and such things were still subject to ecclesiastical censure, you might remember the "Good ship Lollipop." And to show you that we're getting on in age I'll tell you that Shirley Temple is America's ambassador to Czechoslovakia and that she probably does something to take the grey out of her hair.

★ ★ ★

Already they are backstabbing each other in the infant Commonwealth of Slavic Nations. Guvriil Popov, the popular mayor of Moscow and supporter of Gorbachev, got into hot water with Boris Yeltsin. Popov quit, not entirely voluntarily, I presume. Though not all is well with our continental airline industry, it's not as bad as it is over there: Moscow's Vnukovo airport had people bedded down in its squalid lounges for days due to fuel shortages.

★ ★ ★

Iran received its first large cheque ($260 million) in payment of a 10-year old claim at the same time as the last American hostage was freed. The U.S. insisted that this was pure coincidence. Yeah, right! The ragged end of the Gulf War has left the people of Iraq in pain and Saddam Hussein in fine form. He is again killing Kurds and joking about the possibility of a coup.

★ ★ ★

It's not condoms they should distribute in New York's schools, but bullet proof vests. The city has seen 500 kids under 16-years old shot so far this year — 60 fatally.

★ ★ ★

The best witty remark of the week comes from the American South. It originates with Bill Clinton, Democratic candidate for the presidency. He commented on Vice President Dan Quayle's remark that he would be a pit-bull during the campaign. "My," drawled Mr. Clinton, "That's got every fire-hydrant in America worried."

★ ★ ★

In a classical pot-calling-the-kettle-black incident, Margaret Thatcher accused her successor John Major of being arrogant for refusing to hold a referendum on European unity.

★ ★ ★

Shamir the Stubborn should follow the example of the Israel Philharmonic which is breaking a 50-year tradition by including again in its repertoire the music of the German composer Richard Wagner — whose image as a Nazi symbol still haunts many Israelis.

★ ★ ★

You've got a shortage in your church budget? On Oct. 31, members who had not paid their dues to the United Nations owed the organization about $525 million, almost half of its 1991 budget. Another $550 million was owed to a separate budget for peace-keeping operations. Who owes the most, you ask? It is the good ol' US. of A. But it must be said that it has begun to pay its arrears, which amounted to 463 million dollars.

★ ★ ★

Hey, there are party-poopers all over the world! China has issued an emergency order banning excessive holiday cheer over the New Year. Any government agency that spends too much will be punished. "When parties must be held, people should only be asked to drink a cup of tea, not to take part in a banquet," ordered the ruling Communist Party. Double sugar, maybe?

★ ★ ★

And here is my annual New Year's wish to all my readers: May your automobile need no great repairs before its warranty runs out; when you have aches and pains it is because your body is telling you something — so may your body not become too talkative; may you not lose any of your credit cards; and may your bank manager smile on you. May you keep the faith, foster love and spread hope. May borrowers return your books and lenders go easy on you; may the hole in the ozone layer, the growing size of the federal deficit, and your increasing clothing size not cause you too much loss of sleep. Above all, may you experience the love of God.

Carl Tuyl is a member of the Ontario Provincial Interfaith Committee on Chaplaincy and chaplaincy co-ordinator in Canada for the Christian Reformed Churches.

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You're on the train called '92

It's hard to sum up a year for other people. For what will you remember 1991?

Most of you will remember the year for what happened closest to home. A friend or relative died. A marriage was begun or was broken up. A child was born. An accident or illness struck. A business was started or failed. A job was lost or a new one was begun. You received an inheritance. You lost money or valued possessions. Someone close to you got into big trouble with the law. Someone close to you had a narrow escape from tragedy or came through a difficult operation.

Whatever it is that stands out for you about the year, it's history — part of the record of humanity. And it's irrevocable — you cannot call it back and do it over. If it was good, you don't want to change it; if it was bad, you have to live with the knowledge that it is written indelibly on the pages of the chapter called A.D. 1991. The passing of time is unforgiving. The train moves on.

Reasons for hope

Nothing of good that you will do in 1992 can ever undo the bad you did in 1991. Only the blood of Christ can cover your sins. Fortunately for you, Christ is not on the train of history anymore. He got off many stops back. Because of this he can revisit the places you left behind and he can, with his broom of grace, sweep everything under the carpet of love.

There is another reason to be glad. The people you hurt or that hurt you are on the train with you, unless, of course, they died, in which case they have no further need of you, though you may have great need of them. But the ones who are still breathing somewhere on this planet and whose minds are still functioning are still within reach. You can help heal their memory by asking for forgiveness or by granting it, and they can help heal you by returning the favour. Best of all, you can forgive yourself. You, too, are on the train called 1992.

In front of you lies a brand new year. That year is for new business but also for old business — for old business to be acknowledged, to be renewed, to be repented of, to be developed and attended to, to be paid for or to be put aside. It will be a year of opportunity for every one of you, no matter how much of a mess you have made of your life.

The future begins today

The thing to do is to start today. In that sense, the train you are on is not called "'92" but "Today." *Now* is the time of opportunity. A certain preacher used to challenge his congregation as follows: "If you can point out any Scripture passage to me that says that we should repent tomorrow or choose whom we shall serve some other day, I'll step out of this pulpit and stop preaching for the rest of my life. As far as I know the Bible always says that you must repent of your sins *now* and you must choose whom you want to serve *today*."

With that in mind, encourage each other to make the train ride into the future as positive and as enjoyable as possible. You can't do a whole lot about the condition of the engine pulling the train and you can't decide the lay of the landscape that passes by your window. Nor can you control the behaviour of all the passengers on board or prevent someone from trying to blow up the track. But you can sure do a lot about the atmosphere in your compartment.

Got your ticket ready? You're on the train, aren't you? *Bon Voyage!*

Two legs of stone stand in the steppes

The incredible happenings in the former Soviet Union (yes, the *former* Soviet Union!) must rank as the most important political development of 1991. Who could have thought five years ago that this mighty empire would be so drastically curtailed?

My father-in-law was born in 1897. When I told him this summer and fall what was happening in Russia (he never talked about the Soviet Union, it was always Russia), tears welled up in his eyes. The same thing happened when I told my mother, who was born in 1908. These people's liyes have spanned the Communist revolution of 1928 and the overthrow of the revolutionary regime in the late 1980s. What is so remarkable (although not to them) is that they saw in this decline of the Soviet empire so clearly the triumph of the Kingdomof God.

God is moving history along to a well-defined future: the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven. It's something we tend to forget as we read the newspaper or hear the news on radio or television. The focus is so much on human personalities and on social and economic pressures that we easily forget that God is the Lord of history. We must learn from our parents and grandparents that this is so. They have seen much. The long view has given them the right perspective. They know that what seems so strong and important today will some day be totally unimportant.

Would you mind if I quoted a very well-known poem "Ozymandias" by Percy Byshe Shelley about what happens to mighty empires?

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
and wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

Our parents of Dutch descent may not have heard of Ozymandias. But they know about a king called Nebuchadnezzar, who thought he was as high and mighty as Ozymandias. An Israelite prince called Daniel told him the following: "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever."

Prophets like Daniel can look into the future. But our parents and grandparents can tell a lot from the past. The message is clear: There is only one Kingdom that will stand. And the good news is that we may enter it! **BW**

Letters (more letters on page 6)

Artist missed arts festival but volunteers for next one

Thank you Marian Van Til for your excellent coverage of the Chiaroscuro Arts Festival. You really made me feel like I should have been there. But as a "professional imaginator" I could only send one of my manna loaves (art work) to the festival as nourishment. You see, I was in the midst of planning an "open house" (soup kitchen), collecting nuanced subtleties for the imaginatively handicapped and getting ready to minister deaconally to those walking around with glasses too dark to see the quirks and quarks of our imaginative humaness.

Yes, we need more arts festivals — may I suggest biannually; and put my name on the list as a volunteer. Somebody *is* making a list, I hope!

George Langbroek
St. Catharines, Ont.

Church should not have forced the issue

Re: Pastors unity appeal to members of the CRC (C.C., Dec. 6).

We, too, believe that this is not the time to leave the Christian Reformed Church. But this "unity appeal" addresses only half the problem. If it is wrong, to leave the denomination for "non-basic reasons," "issues of the moment," then it is equally wrong for others to force these issues, knowing it tears the denomination appart.

We have first-hand experience of what this separation is doing to our family, friends, husbands and wives, parents and children. Until now all we have heard is appeals for unity addressed to those contemplating leaving the denomination.

We believe it is time for us in the CRC to stop, reflect and consider if what is happening in our congregation over these issues is worth tearing our denomination apart. If we are really serious about unity and earnestly pray for it, perhaps we may come to the conclusion that we as CRC members are not ready to open all church offices to women.

Read what Scripture and the Lord's Supper liturgy has to say to those who seek to raise discord in the church. Read also the promises held out for peacemakers. For the sake of unity and the honour of God, both sides must consider Psalm 122: 8-9.

If we sit back now and only point an accusing finger at our brothers and sisters who are leaving or think about leaving the denomination, we are deceiving ourselves. We are all guilty of pride and putting our own priorities first.

We urge you, senior pastors, use the trust, confidence and experience that you have, and address a pastoral letter to all consistories, classes and to synod, and call all of us back to humility and the making of peace.

Klaas and Catherine Zwier
Iroquois, Ont.

Pastor did not 'refuse' to sign, he 'declined'

The front page of C.C., Dec. 6, 1991 claims that I refused to sign the "Pastors' Appeal for Unity." If I had refused to sign the *Reformed Confessions*, that would have been front-page news, because I am obliged to sign these confessions. I *refuse* to eat food that is bad for my health but I *decline* to eat food that I don't like. The word "refuse" should not have been used in your front-page article.

I declined to sign for similar reasons as indicated by Rev. Martin Geleynse. Does this "appeal" reach the hearts of the concerned people? Are the issues (the ordination of women, creation/evolution) the only concerns? I sense an unhappiness among many CRC members — not so much because they are afraid of new things, but because they are missing some of the old sound digging into the Word.

The editor of the Christian Reformed Church publication *The Banner* wrote an encouraging article about the slippery slope. Yes, the confessions are in place. But we must always be aware that we are on a slope (we are climbing a mountain), so we could slip. I would like to keep people who have a critical mind in our denomination, so that they can warn us against the dangers of slipping. I do not like the style of some of them who seem to be faultfinders.

We must ask ourselves, however: have we given breathing space to people that think differently. Concerned members have been ridiculed and alienated by attitudes of other members.

The "Pastors' Appeal" also oversimplifies the Gospel with the statement that the saving work of Christ is not in jeopardy. Who is going to decide when to draw the line between jeopardy and safety?

Is it safe to say that Adam was born as a baby from a primate? Does that not affect our thinking about the second Adam? If we accept evolution does that not affect our understanding of the end of the world? Reformed doctrines include much more than "Jesus saves." They speak about creation, fall, election, sanctification, judgementday.

Pastor Jacob Binnema, Sr.
Edmonton, Alta.

Was the pastors' appeal for *all* church members?

I write to you with considerable hesitation about the appeal of older pastors to members of the Christian Reformed Church. You see, all these pastors, like Jacob, were consumed by the daytime heat and the cold at night to take care of the Lord's sheep. We must esteem them worthy of double honour because their task was well done.

Yet, when I read the appeal I thought about my mother, who used to say, "When two have a quarrel they are usually both guilty." She didn't say fifty-fifty. I agree with the pastors' appeal for unity. Probably Calvin would also agree with their conviction that breaking with the church may take place only when the essence of the Christian faith is at stake and the message of the Gospel — Jesus Christ and him crucified — is questioned.

Yet the only reference in the appeal to *all* church members is that we are not able to deal with the issues before us in a spirit of fellowship, respect and mutual acceptance. But it is not clear whether "we" means all of us or only those who are breaking fellowship. Probably the three ministers who didn't sign felt something of this too, as I gather from the statement of Rev. Martin Geleynse.

Acts 15 tells about the Council of Jerusalem dealing at length with a very important issue. We get the impression that after considerable debate they could make a unanimous decision. I sometimes wonder if in our meetings, after prayer for the leading of the Spirit, we end up following too much the Greek idea of democracy in which 50 per cent plus one carries the decision.

My conclusion is that the appeal would have gained in force of conviction if it had also included a paragraph referring to lack of effort by many of us to heal brokenness, distil growing bitterness or to address alienation experienced by some church members, as suggested by Rev. Geleynse. Where two have a quarrel, it is well for both sides to examine themselves closely.

John den Boer
Port Perry, Ont.

BEYOND BELIEF

SURE I LIKE IT HERE. IT'S FANTASTIC, IT'S HEAVEN. WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE?
BUT YES I AM JUST A LITTLE IRRITATED, KNOWING THAT WE COULD HAVE BEEN HERE THREE YEARS AGO...
... HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THAT OAT BRAN DIET YOU PUT US THROUGH.

News digest

Marian Van Til, editor

Sears catalogue 'indecent'

NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C. — The Vancouver-based *Christian News* reports that a seven-year-old New Westminster boy brought a Sears catalogue, the "Christmas Wishbook," to his mother, Karen Wardle, not long ago to ask her, "Mom, why does [the woman in] this picture have no underwear on?" Wardle, who attends St. Michael's Catholic Church in Burnaby, was astonished. Her son had pointed out an ad which showed a woman in "black nylons shown from the back side with, indeed, no underwear on," says Wardle.

Wardle and some of her friends contacted Sears Canada. Sears spokesperson Russ Rigney admitted that some of the ads "are not suitable for a kid-oriented catalogue." He promised that the company would reconsider how it presents merchandise in its 1992 edition.

Charities' 'tax detective'

WINNIPEG — Leon Singh is a "tax detective" who doesn't work for the government. He helps charitable organizations discover if they've paid too much tax, and if they have he helps them recover it. Singh directs MEDA Trade International's tax recovery service. The trade group is a subsidiary of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA).

With business, property, GST and provincial retail taxes to be paid, it's not uncommon for charities to overlook exemptions to which they're entitled, explains Singh — and the government doesn't go out of its way to point them out. Singh's group examines a charity's records, determines the taxable status of its purchases, prepares and files refunds claims, defends these claims at any hearings, and appeals disallowances which it feels are incorrectly applied. The fee for this service, which goes to helping the poor, is 25 per cent of what is recovered — but nothing if no taxes are recovered.

Bike helmet law?

TORONTO — A law which will compel all bicyclists on Ontario roadways to wear helmets is nearing passage at Queen's Park. Bill 124 has passed second reading and is currently being considered by the legislature's Resource and Development Committee.

Statistics show that the number of head injuries suffered by cyclists decreases dramatically when they wear helmets: 75 per cent of all cyclist deaths involve head injuries, but cyclists with helmets have an 85 per cent reduction in risk of head injury and an 88 per cent reduction in brain injury risk. Oddly perhaps, in light of the statistics, the Toronto City Cycling Committee (TCCC) is the only cycling group supporting the bill. TCCC is a citizens' advisory group to the Toronto City Council and works to benefit especially those who use a bicycle as their primary means of transportation.

Letters

Heed the wisdom found among the aged

How good and encouraging it was to read the appeal for peace and unity by our older and retired pastors in the Dec. 6 issue of *Calvinist Contact*. Thank you, brothers!

Especially in the light of biblical passages like John 17, Ephesians 4 and Romans 14-15, this appeal is so refreshing to read. In the Romans 14-15 passages Paul devotes a large section to *how to deal with each other* when there is conflict.

How I hope and pray that those among us who are Christian Reformed will take to heart this word from our senior pastors, men who love the Lord and want to live by his Word and who have proclaimed and still do proclaim that Word.

The problems we have in a few congregations are so unfortunate. May the leadership there especially heed this appeal.

In a few publications, the Christian Reformed Church is pictured as all negative and it is done in a spirit totally contrary to the Spirit of Christ and of the Scriptures. What damage that does!

Dear fellow Christian Reformed church members, in John 12:12 Job asks, "Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?"

A common faith and fight

Listen to this appeal. To those who have left, reconsider your decision. Do not follow someone here or there on the very dubious road of adding to the splintering up of Christ's church. What unites God's people is our oneness in Christ and our fight against the common enemy, namely the world (see John 17).

In *The Banner* of Aug. 26, I read the following by my former but now retired Bible professor at Calvin College, Dr. J.H. Bratt.

Despite what some people say, the Christian Reformed Church can by no stretch of the imagination be dubbed a false church. We hold to such verities as the supreme authority of the Word of God, creation ex nihilo, *the special creation of the first human pair in God's image, the Trinity, the deity of Christ, atonement through Christ's blood shed at Calvary, salvation by grace through faith alone, regeneration through the Holy Spirit and the physical resurrection of Christ and his literal second coming.*

Let's not allow our discussions on women in office and creation-science obscure our insistence on the basic doctrines of the church. We have not surrendered the fundamentals of the faith.

Ponder these words and act accordingly, for your own sake, your family's sake, your teenagers' sake, your church's sake and for the sake of a more united witness in our world and for the honour of God's name.

The church is like a family. It must also solve its problems in that way — together. Prolonged negativism reaps bitter fruit. Positive faith and discussions reap positive fruit.

Pastor Ralph Koops
Cambridge, Ont.

Outreach suffers from internal strife

I appreciated the recent appeal for unity from the older and/or retired ministers of the Christian Reformed Church. I feel a rich fund of pastoral experience and wisdom went into that appeal and it forces us all to think twice.

As a CRC chaplain, I also want to add a small note from my own limited experience.

I often meet people who don't even know the difference between Roman Catholics and Protestants. How am I supposed to explain the differences which currently raise hostility among us? No one cares. No one is interested.

As a chaplain, part of my credibility comes from the credibility of the organization which backs me up and endorses me. And when my church splits up, people have a hard time taking me seriously.

I am sure many chaplains and mission workers would agree with me when I say to everyone: Please consider the devastating cost of internal church strife. Outreach dies when we focus on ourselves. There is a needy world all around us, including many people who have no relationship with the Jesus Christ of the Scriptures.

There is only one God. Let us unite around the cross and the empty grave.

Nick Overduin
Chaplain, Brock University
St. Catharines, Ont.

Never asked for these debates

We learn from history that we don't learn from it. And that's exactly what is happening in the Christian Reformed Church of today.

I was in my late teens when the *Gereformeerde Kerken* in Holland had their dispute with Professor K. Schilder and others. Congregations were ripped apart by it. Family relations soured and broke up. It was awful.

I've never learned Hebrew, Greek or Latin. So when I'm told that the Hebrew word 'was' in Genesis 1: 2 could also mean 'became,' I have to believe the experts. The only trouble is that those experts or professors are telling us a lot these last 20 years or so.

What are we to believe? Why are they asking *us* to take sides? I don't remember any of us, ordinary church members, asking for all this debate on different theories. Now we are blamed for *not* taking sides or for taking the *wrong* side.

Let's go halves

A while ago someone asked our C.C. editor to mediate or solve all these disputes in the churches. I know it would not be easy but here are some tips to start it off.

1. Call a round-table conference with, let's say half a dozen persons from each side (that must be possible because we should be able to work together Grand Rapids keeps telling us.)

2. Ask an outside person, not a CRC member, that is, to chair this conference.

3. Make it a requirement that both sides have to give in a bit, if that is what it will take.

Personally, I wouldn't mind if that conference decided, for example, that we should have women deacons but not women elders (ministers are considered elders too). That way both sides have given in a bit and church life could go on again.

Well, Mr. Witvoet? You won't know until you try.

Bastian A. Langendoen
Welland, Ont.

Just a moment/Herman Praamsma

"I wish I knew the good of wishing" (Henry S. Leigh, British poet and dramatist, 1837-1883, from "Wishing")

If only we could have all our wishes come true! It is no wonder that many fairy tales are build around the notion of granted wishes. Only think of Alladin and his marvellous lamp which housed a wish-granting geni. Wouldn't it be just great if we could have three guaranteed wishes for 1992?

The only problem, of course, would be to decide on *which* three items we'd like to see happen in the new year. Should we concentrate on international peace? Or should our families have priority? How about our church or denominational life? Or what about our own health or that of a loved one? Maybe one of our first wishes should be for an improved economy, or the disappearance of food banks and their necessity, or....

I guess you could spend just about all of the coming year trying to decide what was really the most important wish you could make, arranging and rearranging your priorities *ad infinitum*, second-guessing yourself all the way to next January! I mean, you could ask for fabulous riches and forget to ask for long life and die right after you became rich; or ask for riches *and* long life, and neglect to mention you'd like to be healthy as well — and become the longest living millionaire with leprosy on this planet.

But if you'd use your wishes for long life, wealth and health, you'd be overlooking things like freedom, happiness and a score of other items that could come back to haunt you in your long life! In fairy tales there was always a catch to the three wishes. No wonder.

What good does it do?

The only way to get out of the problem of the three wishes, it seems, is to cheat a little bit, like the character who had as his very first wish that he would have an unlimited number of wishes! Needless to say, his fairy tale didn't end well, either.

Maybe Henry Leigh knew what he was talking about when he wished to know what good it does to wish! Does it serve any purpose, except to confuse and disillusion?

The only person I can think of who chose wisely was a man called Solomon. Remember? He asked for an understanding mind. We read that that wish pleased the Lord and he granted Solomon riches, honour, and (if Solomon walked in God's way) long life as well! This immediately reminds me of the New Testament words of Jesus, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and all these other things will be given to you as well."

What are your wishes for 1992?

Maybe our wishes should be tied to God's purpose and be reflected in our dedicated effort to be in line with that purpose. How can we best express those wishes? By listening to Jesus, and repeating after him every day of this new year:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your Name,
Your Kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.
For yours is the Kingdom, and the power,
and the glory forever. Amen!

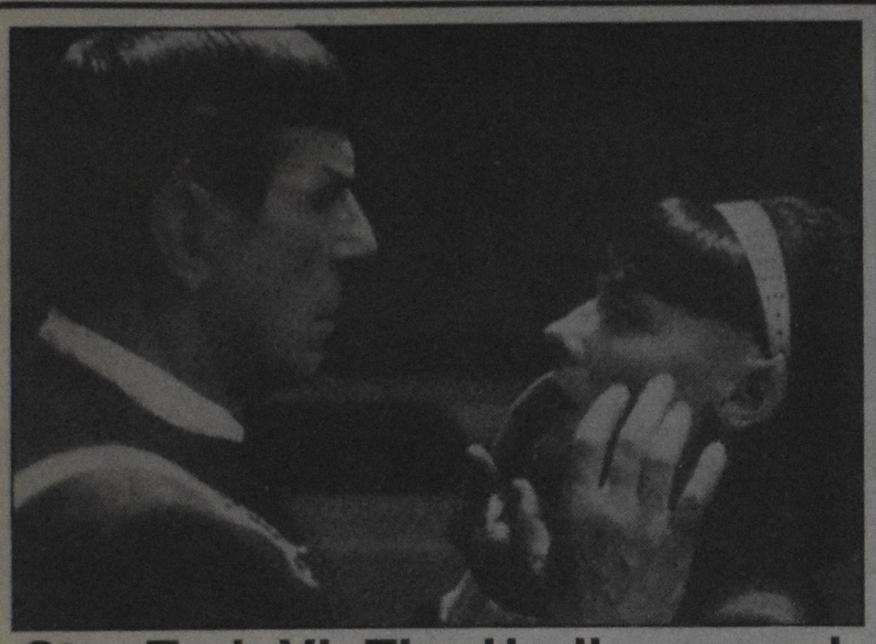
And when your daily wish and effort is in keeping with God's purpose, you will not be disappointed.

Have a happy 1992!

Herman Praamsma is co-pastor of Immanuel Christian Reformed Church, Brampton, Ont.

Cinema summaries

Marian Van Til



Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country

Rated *PG*

Stars William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, DeForest Kelley, James Doohan, Nichele Nicols, George Takei, Walter Keonig, Christopher Plummer, David Warner, Kim Cattrall
Written by Leneard Nimoy and Nicholas Meyer
Directed by Nicholas Meyer

I confess to being a long-time fan of the *Star Trek* television series, which seems to have found eternal life in re-runs but which lasted a mere three years (1966-69) in its first run. While the current spaceship *Enterprise* flies weekly under the title *Star Trek: The Next Generation,* and with a new crew of much better developed characters and more believable plots, the original-cast *Star Trek* movies, except for the jocular fourth one, have been disappointing.

This film rebounds from that somewhat (there's no place to go but up). It is the sixth and supposedly last voyage to "where no one has gone before," and it has some things going for it: it certainly isn't as dull as movie Number 1 was; nor as earnest as Numbers 2 and 3; nor as pompous and religiously offensive as Number 5 (they searched for God in that one and found him to be a vindictive, arbitrary figment of the imagination).

Star Trek fans (of which there seem to be enough to fill theatres all over the world) will probably like this film. But it's merely interesting, not captivating; and its attempts at humour (some of which are too veiled for most viewers to catch immediately) cause just a few smiles rather than out-and-out laughs.

Pardon my paunch

Being a crew member on a starship like the *Enterprise* takes considerable physical and mental stamina, grit, the relishing of risk-taking and the ability to forego families and long-term relationships — all of which seem to be best suited for relatively young folks, not for the near-geriatric Captain Kirk and Company who first boarded the *Enterprise* 25 years ago. (I'm all for developing more movie and television roles for older actors, but people should be allowed to act their age.) If this isn't the last *Star Trek* movie with this crew (they say that every time they finish making the next movie), it certainly should be.

The plot of *The Undiscovered Country* is a kind of end-of-the-Cold-War story transplanted a few centuries forward. The Klingons, who have been the equivalent of the Soviet "Evil empire" all these years, are making peace overtures. But some United Federation folks, Captain Kirk included, believe them to be innately untrustworthy; others are simply afraid of change: they need *somebody* to hate. And so a momentous Klingon/Federation peace conference is sabotaged, and assassination is afoot.

Eventually, needless to say, "all's well that ends well," and the *Enterprise's* crew prepares to say goodbye, insisting they'll leave the ship to new generations who will move into the "undiscovered country" of a bright future.

'Man' — and alien — the measure of all things

Though *Star Trek* creator/producer Gene Roddenberry died last summer his mark is still on this film. He was an adroit science fiction creator whose vision of an improvable human race which manages to move beyond all its current barbarisms to a Peacable Kingdom inhabits this film.

There are up-beat and celebrative elements in Roddenberry's vision, but it seems amazing that after thousands of years of human history proving otherwise, he could actually believe that we could bring about that Kingdom on our own.

David Baerwald's lullabies disturb instead of calm

David Baerwald: *Bedtime Stories*

1990 A&M Records

Bill Fledderus

A recent review of Joni Mitchell's latest album (C.C., Dec. 13, p. 7) mentioned David Baerwald as a guest vocalist, but because he is not well-known, his album is reviewed here.

Baerwald is a Los Angeles musician whose first album, *Bedtime Stories*, came out last year. His songs reveal an artist struggling to emerge from broken relationships and alcohol abuse. Some of them criticize the American way of life while others portray attempts to renew lapsed friendships and to enjoy life once again. "Hello Mary," for example, has this poignant refrain:

I just called to check and see
if my memory's correct
and you mean a thing to me.

Baerwald's gritty rock and his portrayals of people who struggle with broken lives are sometimes reminiscent of John Hiatt's work, though Baerwald is even less optimistic.

Bedtime Stories credits Joni Mitchell's husband, Larry Klein, with production and bass work, and Mitchell sings background vocals on the song "Liberty Lies." Most of the drumming is courtesy Vinnie Colaiuta who also did work on Mitchell's album.

The Tower of Power horn section spices up one of the songs, "Dance," which boasts the refrain, "I learned a little secret. Secret is, you got to dance!" Dancing for Baerwald represents taking control of his life and celebrating.

However, whereas Mitchell celebrates a spiritual hope, for Baerwald hope and belief in God are much more elusive. In "Good Times," he sings:

I don't know nothing at all
except there is no single
saving grace
no miracle cures no resting
place.

Baerwald's celebrations are desperate attempts to seize the day because "life is short and death is long." His songs seem nihilistic.

In terms of its subject matter, *Bedtime Stories* is not likely to be anyone's favourite album. It is upbeat in tempo and exhibits some fine guitar work but its lyrics sing of poverty and the mixed up mess Baerwald sees in the big cities of America.

Baerwald is a talented vocalist, guitarist, keyboardist and social observer. One of his toughest and truest observations goes like this:

instead of nero
we got Madonna
she's fiddling with herself.

It may now be passé to see Madonna as a symbol of social decline, but when Baerwald wrote these lines in early 1990 he was almost a solitary voice — and he still says it better than most.

Baerwald paints pictures most of us do not want to see: of people who are down and out, people whose only experience of Christianity is "a man selling god" on television or a woman "screaming about satan," people who worry about the "pollyannas" led astray by such so-called Christians, people who find the best they can do is crawl.

Baerwald helps us confront the great need for us to extend Christ's love beyond our own safe circles and to cry for the injustice and pain of a confused world awaiting Christ's return.

Ontario Arts Council announces permanent translation program

TORONTO (OAC) — The literature office of the Ontario Arts Council (OAC) has confirmed the previously pilot "translation program" as a permanent program as a result of increased funding. The new program budget ($50,000) stems from a recent increase to OAC's base grant. The deadline for applications is February 3, 1992.

The program assists the translation into English of contemporary book-length works of fiction, poetry and drama from Canada and abroad. "Bringing into your midst what is best from other cultures through the medium of your own language and culture is an important activity. We have been remiss in Canada for doing so little translation, depending on British and U.S. translators to give us a view of other literatures," says Gary Geddes, a literary translator and poet.

The application for a translation program grant must be made by a Canadian-owned, Ontario-based book publisher on behalf of the translator. "This program has been extended on a permanent basis to allow Canadians an opportunity to read contemporary literary works from various cultures," explains literature officer Lorraine Filyer. "The Translation Program will help writers whose first language is not English or French have their works translated and read by a larger audience," she said.

Applications will be evaluated by a jury of independent literary experts who will assess each request by established criteria. The funding to the translation program was one of the priorities of OAC's literature office, as was increasing funding to book and magazine publishers and increasing the number of grants available to writers.

For program information and application forms contact OAC's Literature Office at (416) 961-1660 or toll free 1-800-387-0058.

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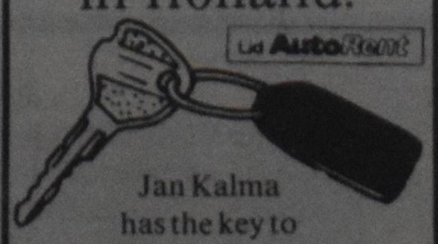

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Marian Van Til, page editor

Nigerian cattle herder meets the Good Shepherd

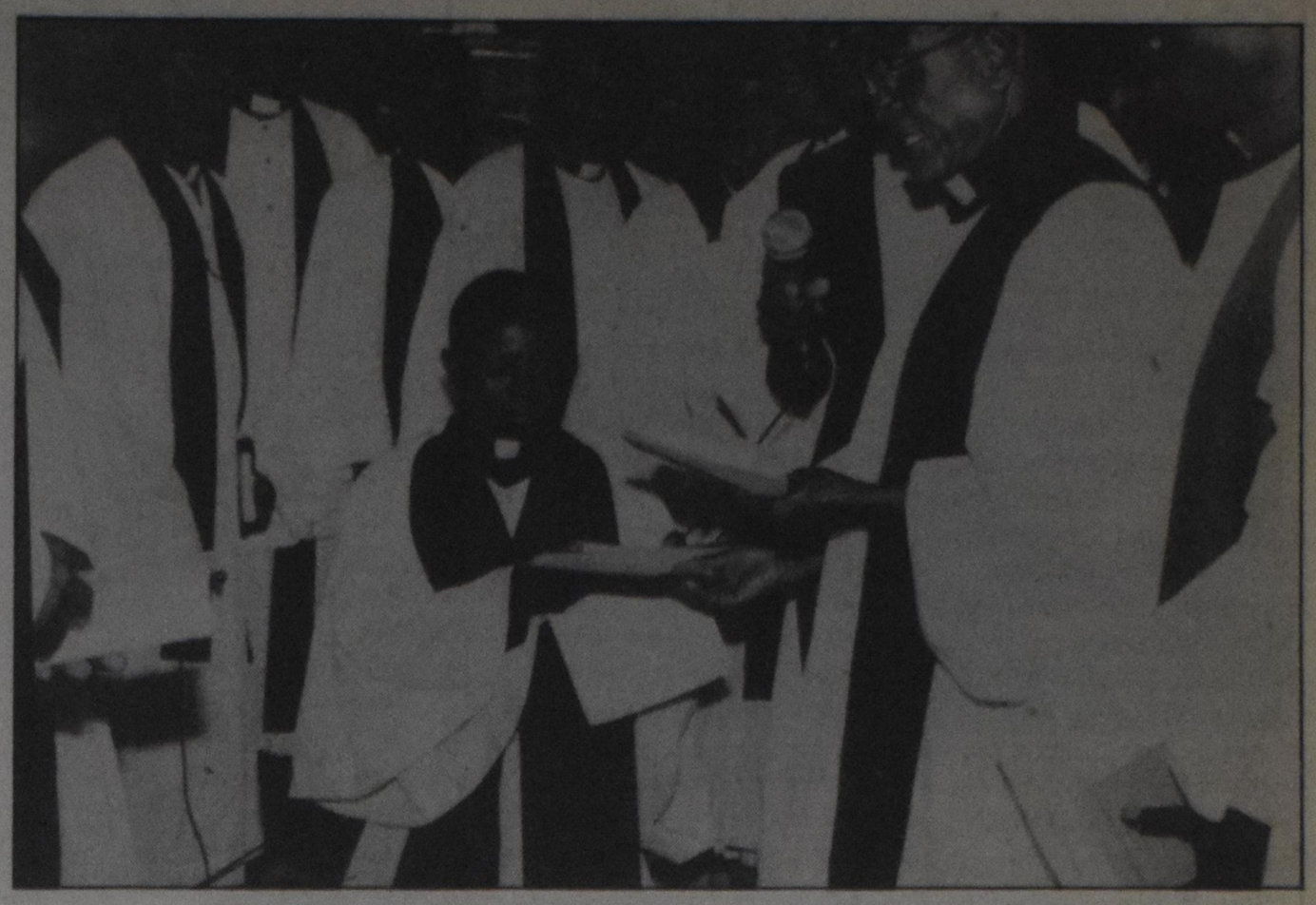

Photo: Krister Evenhouse

Ja'e Na Ango is ordained into the Christian Reformed Church in Nigeria after an unusual journey to the faith.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (CRWM) — One of the first times Ja'e Na Ango encountered a Christian he feared for his life. A missionary with the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) caught Ja'e and his brother stealing mangoes. They were scared because they had heard that white people eat black children. But all the missionary did was scold them and give them some literature.

When they got home, their father, a chief among the Fulani people, beat them for reading the Christian literature and warned them that they would become like dogs if they accepted the stories. But last November after the persistent pursuit of the Holy Spirit Ja'e was ordained as the first Fulani pastor in the Christian Reformed Church in Nigeria (CRCN).

Since the early 1980s Christian Reformed World Missions has worked among the Fulani, a people group that extends through several West African countries. The Fulani, including Ja'e and his father, are mostly cattle herders and are one of about 20 ethnic groups that make up the CRCN.

Ja'e's ordination into the CRCN will be an asset toward reaching more of his people for Christ. His path to ordination is evidence of God's plan.

'Get up' and follow Jesus

"As we were moving camp we stopped to sleep on a hill," Ja'e says of his conversion experience. "At midnight God visited me in a dream. A white-robed figure came up to me and said, 'Get up. Get up. Follow the Jesus whom you love.' Then I was lifted up to heaven. But when I woke up I was still on my mat."

Since the experience with the mangoes and Christian literature, Ja'e had continued to hear Christian stories from a missionary's cook and others who encouraged him to accept Jesus as his Saviour. When he had the dream he finally went to a Nigerian Christian pastor and asked how to follow Jesus. He was told to come back the next day to profess his faith to the elders. Ja'e didn't return, but the next night he had the same dream again. So he went back to the pastor who called the elders together. They all sang and prayed as they welcomed Ja'e into the Christian church.

When Ja'e became a Christian he had two wives. The pastor told him to take care of both of them and God would show him which one he should continue to live with. When persecution from Muslims continued, one wife did leave Ja'e. Her father then sold seven cows to pay for sorcery to be used against Ja'e and kill him. But Ja'e continued to live and it was his father-in-law who died.

When the persecution persisted from others, Ja'e and his remaining wife fled to a Bible school, where they were taken in and Ja'e eventually graduated. After finishing his studies he travelled around Nigeria to preach about Jesus.

"When I finished these travels I decided to bring the Gospel where there were no Fulani Christians," Ja'e says. "I moved with my family and my cows all the way to Cameroon and Central Africa. I found Christian Fulani in Cameroon but not one in Central Africa."

A burden for his own people

Ja'e, now 46, heard about the CRCN at a Fulani conference where he met Christian Reformed missionary Ruth Veltkamp. Ruth, who works with the Fulani in Nigeria, encouraged Ja'e to come to the CRCN to work as an evangelist among the Fulani.

"I was so happy about what they were doing that I decided to return to Nigeria to be an evangelist for the CRCN," Ja'e recalls. "They have given of themselves in many different ways so that Fulani can hear the story of Jesus Christ. I travelled widely from Central Africa to Cameroon to Nigeria, but I had not found a church that really sacrificed themselves to work among the Fulani."

There were many guests at the ordination last November, including missionaries and Christian Fulani from other churches in Nigeria. Ja'e looks forward to preaching to his own people and bringing them into the CRCN, which now has nearly 150,000 people worshiping each Sunday.

"The thing that has helped me ever since I first became a Christian is my strong desire to preach the Gospel," Ja'e testifies. "If I do not preach my heart becomes heavy. After two or three days I must get up and go to some Fulani camps and share with them the story of Jesus Christ. Still today my strongest desire is to spread the Gospel."

European evangelicals call for recognition of Yugoslav republics

BERN, Switzerland (EP) — The European Evangelical Alliance, an association of 10 million evangelicals in 19 European countries, has called for the immediate recognition of the Yugoslav republics of Croatia, Slovenia, Boznia and Herzegovina as independent states, according to a Dec. 10 report from IDEA, the information service of the German Evangelical Alliance.

In letters to the European Parliament, the United Nations and the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the chairperson of the alliance, Willi Sartorius of Switzerland, also demanded that sanctions be imposed against the "godless Grand-Serbian communist regime." Otherwise, he said, the lives of millions of citizens would be put at risk.

In a first response, the Swiss foreign office in Bern emphasized that it would do all in its power to alleviate the suffering. Diplomatic recognition of Croatia and Serbia could, however, be "counterproductive" because it might inhibit dialogue with the adversaries. Switzerland would, at the same time, be prepared to follow "a significant number of nations" in the recognition of the two republics.

The German government said it wanted to recognize Croatia and Slovenia before Christmas, while the European Community wanted to wait till some time this month.

Norwegians defrock anti-abortion pastor

OSLO, Norway (REC) — The Church of Norway dismissed anti-abortion campaigner Ludvig Nessa from his post as assistant pastor. Nessa has engaged in actions since 1984 protesting the country's abortion law of 1978. Norway allows free abortions up to 12 weeks after conception.

Nessa's bishop, Even Fougner, reprimanded Nessa. Nessa was given a court sentence for his actions, and he lost his last appeal on Aug. 30. Fougner then recommended his dismissal to the state ministry for church affairs. The formal charges were that Nessa has set up a separate congregation within his parish.

Nessa's dismissal is the first case of a pastor of the Church of Norway losing his post since World War II, the Church of Norway reported.

South African church may face decline

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — The Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA) face a decade of decline if no changes occur. This is the result of a study of membership patterns by Gerhard Oosthuizen which appeared in the RCSA's *Die Kerkblad*. Oosthuizen noted there are financial problems in the RCSA. He pointed out declining membership as a major factor.

From 1987 to 1991, membership in the RCSA fell from 116,053 to 113,211. All of that loss is accounted for in the decline of baptized members, that is, the youth of the church. Oosthuizen projected that in the year 2,000, the RCSA would have only 94,000 members if the trends continue.

One of the consequences is declining size of the congregations. About two congregations per year will have to close, he concluded. Over the next six years, there will be about 68 persons trained and eligible for ministry. Only 18 of these will likely be able to find a calling within the RCSA. No new theological professors will be able to be appointed, since it will be unnecessary to train anyone additional for the next several years.

Oosthuizen called on the congregations and classes of RCSA to give careful attention to this problem.

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A Presbyterian Comments

Robert J. Bernhardt

No matter how fast things change, we need not fear the future

Being poised at the beginning of a new year is a rather awesome experience. Events reported in the news media encourage us to analyze what has happened during the past 12 months. And as a natural consequence almost all of us also now find ourselves speculating about what this new year will bring. As we review various situations in our world we are quickly conscious that the questions are much clearer than the answers. Indeed, uncertainty seems to be the only constant factor.

For example, dare we to hope that in the coming year the citizens of Canada will make progress in understanding one another's sense of identity? Will we be able to set aside regional, ethnic, and partisan political interests long enough to seek an equitable resolution to national concerns? In strained economic times will people resist the temptation to exploit the situation for their own selfish advantage? Will we Christians find new and more effective ways of expressing our convictions and values without exuding self-righteousness?

Is peace any closer in the Middle East? Is the recent release of hostages a basis for hope? Has progress been made in improving relationships between peoples and nations or have old enemies just adopted new strategies?

Are we too complacent?

Despite the startling beginnings of change reflected in the destruction of the Berlin Wall, who at this time last year would have predicted the virtual collapse of the USSR? Indeed, perhaps we are regarding events there much too complacently. Have we been so content to watch the dramatic reduction in East-West tensions that we have underestimated the challenges that political and economic turmoil within the USSR will generate?

Prospects for the ministry of the Gospel have also been changed by the dynamics of world events. In Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union a window has been opened, at least temporarily. Christian organizations, especially those engaged in the distribution of the Scriptures, have been given an unprecedented welcome. And although it is very difficult to predict whether or not the openness will continue, many people on both sides have been thrilled with the opportunities for fellowship and mutual sharing in the work of the Gospel.

The situation in China is just the reverse. Probably as a consequence of recent events in the USSR, restrictions on indigenous Christian activity in China have tightened. The Church in China, still suspect as to its sympathies for the democracy movement, appears to be in for another round of stringent regulations.

We're not in control, but God is

And if world events don't interest us very much, there is the unsettling reality that even in our personal lives there is great uncertainty as to what 1992 may bring. Not one of us knows what occasions of jubilation or humiliation there may be in the coming months. The successes we seek may yet, despite our strongest efforts, elude us. We who love security may be called upon to learn more about living with uncertainty. We who like to project images of confidence and self-assurance may have before us lessons to learn about dependence and trust. And we all, despite our professions of faith, have yet so much more to learn about trusting the Lord.

As our recent celebration of the Saviour's birth must surely have reminded us, the yet unseen future is not to be approached with dread. Although there may be uncertainty about what lies ahead in 1992 one thing sustain us in hope. Whatever may happen, we approach the days ahead with the confidence that they will be lived out in the Lord's sight. Fortunately, nothing can take us outside the realm of his care.

Robert Bernhardt is pastor of Chalmers Presbyterian Church, Hamilton, Ont.

Malaysian immigration ruling threatens future of Dalat school for missionary children

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (EP) — A Malaysian immigration ruling threatens the future of a missionary children's school in Penang, and could create serious problems for missionary families throughout Asia.

The Director of Immigration Services in Kuala Lumpur rejected student extension visas for seven children attending the Dalat School, located on Penang, an island off the northeast coast of mainland Malaysia, according to a report from the Christian and Missionary Alliance, which operates the school. The Nov. 27 decision follows a previous decision to reject 27 new student visas in late September.

Dalat School serves children of Christian and Missionary Alliance missionaries, and children of other missionaries serving in southeast Asia. Other students come from families in the diplomatic corps and the foreign business community in Malaysia.

Immigration authorities say that because all the children involved belong to parents who live outside the country, they are not eligible for student visas.

New interpretation

Though the regulation appears in the country's law books it has not been enforced for years, according to the report. When the school, formerly based in Vietnam, moved to Malaysia in 1965, government authorities said the regulation would not apply to its students.

David. K. Wilcox, the school's director, said he foresees serious repercussions if the immigration ruling is allowed to stand. "We cannot continue to operate if we are barred from bringing students into Malaysia," he said.

The school has an enrollment of more than 180 students and employs 50 staff members. It "is a crucial part of the C&MA overall missionary effort," according to the report. "There is perhaps no other issue closer to the hearts of missionary parents than the well-being of their children. An uncertain future for the school would have a deeply unsettling effect on the parents."

Dalat administrators have appealed the decision to the U.S. ambassador, parents who are executives of foreign enterprises in the nation, and a local Malaysian student whose mother is the Minister of Tourism, Youth, Sports, and Welfare.

Episcopalians break with their church

FRESNO, Calif. (EP) — A group of conservative Episcopalians have formed an independent diocese, in a move many believe could divide the church. "We realize that it is impossible to be totally faithful to the Gospel and at the same time be totally loyal to the current structure of the Episcopal Church," said a statement released by leaders of the new Episcopal Synod of America, which met in mid-November.

What's the situation now?

NEW YORK, N.Y. (EP) — Joseph Fletcher, a former Episcopal priest who popularized situation ethics in the 1960s, died recently at age 84. Later in his life, Fletcher renounced his Christian faith.

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Features

The story of an atypical refugee sponsorship

The Amayas arrive from El Salvador

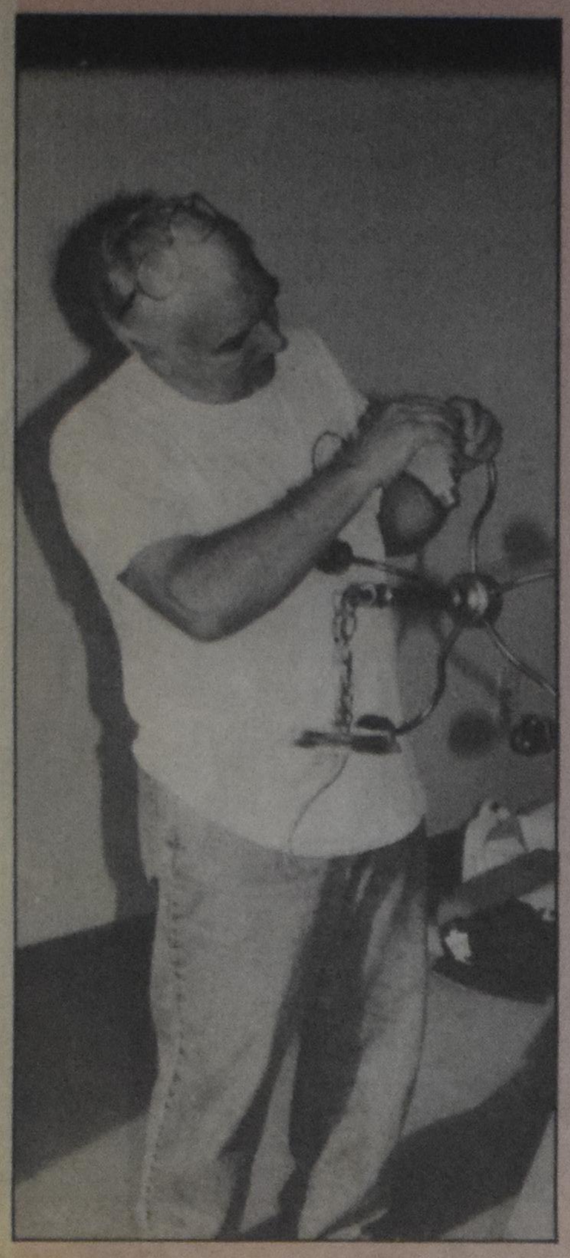


Photo: Bill Fledderus

Volunteer Tom Abma tries to fix a light fixture which had no switch in the Amaya's townhouse.

Bill Fledderus

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — At 65 years old, Abel Amaya is old enough to be the father of most immigrants accepted into Canada. His acceptance proves that the Canadian government sometimes shows mercy as well as justice in dealing with refugees.

Amaya left El Salvador in 1984 because his sister, an army-appointed town mayor, had been assassinated by guerrillas. Amaya got a visa for Mexico and crossed illegally into Texas, where he applied for political asylum. In El Salvador, he says he feared for his life after having been threatened both verbally and by notes slipped under his door. His fiancee and two youngest children soon joined him in a Hispanic community in Dallas because they too felt threatened in El Salvador.

Whereas the U.S. does not officially recognize El Salvador as a country which produces political refugees, Canada does. Canada recognized the legitimacy of Amaya's claim several years ago before acceptance standards were made more severe.

But Amaya's age was a difficulty: how do you accommodate a refugee who is not likely to work much longer nor become very fluent in English? A 65-year-old who needs to change almost every detail of his daily life, including his language, needs closer attention than the government can afford to give.

Joint sponsorship

The Canadian answer was joint sponsorship: Canada promised to pay Amaya's basic costs for one year if some Canadian group would promise to be responsible for orienting him and helping him adapt to Canadian culture.

Three of Amaya's children, one of them with an eight-year-old daughter, already lived together in Toronto. But the adult children did not earn enough money to be eligible to sponsor their father.

Amaya's name was put on a list and soon a church in Cambridge came forward promising to sponsor Amaya. However, at the last minute, difficulties forced the church to withdraw. Amaya's situation was urgent because it looked like his appeal with U.S. immigration would soon receive an unfavourable judgment.

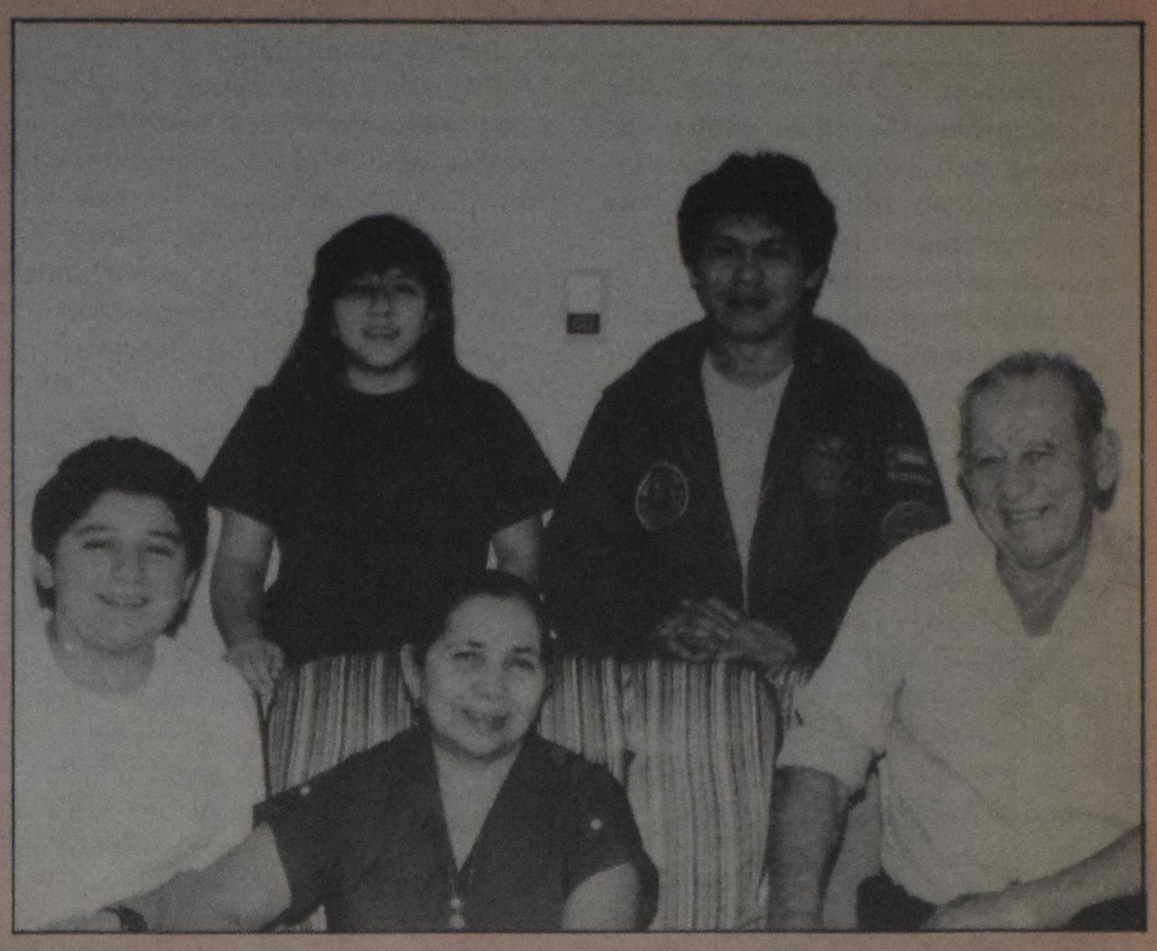


Photo: Bert Witvoet

The Amaya family in their townhouse in St. Catharines: front row from l. to r.: Juan, Maria Luisa and Abel; back row: Iris and brother Amilcar from Toronto.

In the end, Amaya and his family were sponsored by Jubilee Christian Reformed Church in St. Catharines. As part of the joint sponsorship agreement the church was given vouchers for free furniture, linens and household items.

November 1st saw four Amayas arrive in St. Catharines: Abel, Maria Luisa, who is in her 50s, and their two youngest children, Iris, 15, and Juan, 13. The three Toronto Amayas were there to celebrate a joyful reunion with them.

Pamela Martin, the only member of the church's refugee committee who speaks any Spanish, and her husband Steve were also at the Toronto airport to welcome the Amayas and to bring them to St. Catharines.

Cleaning a townhouse and lending sweaters

A lot of preparation was done before the plane touched down, Martin points out, but the first two weeks after the Amaya's arrival were the most work. "I didn't think I'd live through them," she

Freddie the frog and the re-defining of redemption 1

Bert Hielema

What does Freddie the frog have to do with redemption and its re-definition? Word has it that when a frog is thrown into boiling water, it jumps out right away, but if it is placed in lukewarm liquid, which is slowly heated, it blithely boils to death without any attempt to leave its lethal bath.

Is this a pointless animal torture tale, or a story of significance for the faithful? It is the latter, I think.

Examples such as this one are used to illustrate the concept of *paradigm*, a word heard now almost everywhere. *Paradigm* literally means pattern or example but now generally describes "a thought structure or a mindset."

The belief in Jesus' days that Earth was flat and had four corners was such a thought structure. When Galileo, about 400 years ago, challenged this flat earth paradigm, he was excommunicated from the church. It is not easy to buck the prevailing paradigm, because paradigms are part of people's frame of reference: they function as an anchor, especially in turbulent times like ours. This is one reason why we today see a return to "the faith of the Fathers" (as if they were perfect).

And Freddie? He became a victim of a *paradigm shift*. He failed to notice a gradual but crucial change in his environment and this cost him his life. Poor Freddie, he took for granted that the water temparature would remain constant because he never experienced this warming trend before. This mindset, this paradigm, led to his death.

What is a paradigm shift? Let me as a businessperson take an example related to my field. To survive in today's rapidly changing, unforgiving, globally competitive business environment, the old rules do not apply anymore; conventional wisdom is irrelevant. Businesses all over the world are looking for paradigm shifters, people who throw out the rule book and institute radical reform. Business is looking for boat rockers, action-oriented personalities, crackpots even, who are not afraid to challenge the status quo.

Now, many of the middle management, punctual pen pushers and dutiful line workers suddenly find their economic life finished, victims of the merciless paradigm shift in business. Businesses never cared much about creation but did have some regard for their workers. No longer. The anonymous monitors of the money machine are not moved by human emotions anymore: now more than ever, the "bottom line" counts. In that sense business has become starkly straightforward. In our cruel economic climate, businesses either die or leapfrog to the top.

God loved the cosmos

The history of Christianity is also one of paradigm shifts. Take Jesus when he came to earth. In his own, unique, subversive way he was a radical reformer, a boat rocker, a paradigm shifter. The thought structure in his day was that the Messiah would be the secular successor to king David, the valiant one, the mighty one in war. The Messiah would liberate Israel from the Romans.

Jesus' entire life was a constant battle to fight that mindset, and not until his death, resurrection and especially the coming of the Holy Spirit, did a few — mostly foreigners — adopt his mindset.

Jesus' message is captured in John 3: 16, that oh-so-familiar and so often twisted verse. The message which the church (by and large) has proclaimed in our individualistic world is that this text says, "God so loved us, humans, that he sent his son...."

But that is not true. It says, "God so loved the *cosmos* that he sent his only Son." That has been the gist of Jesus' Good News. We, however, have placed the emphasis on personal salvation and have paid little attention to the message of the Gospel, which *includes* our lives with the cosmos, and the cosmos itself. Our mind has been set on heaven where God dwells in inapproachable light.

Consider Romans 8: 18-25 as well. Just a few pecks out of that passage: *For the created order awaits, with eager longing, with neck outstretched, (on*

says.

Cleaning the townhouse chosen for the Amayas by the refugee committee was one of the biggest jobs, according to Martin. "It was filthy," she says. "We were truly thankful for all the volunteers who came out."

Martin also praises the government's generosity under the joint sponsorship program.

"One thing which did fall between the gaps was sweaters. Being from Dallas, of course the Amayas didn't have any." Martin recalls. "It turned out to be really funny the first few weeks, because my husband and I ended up lending them almost all of ours."

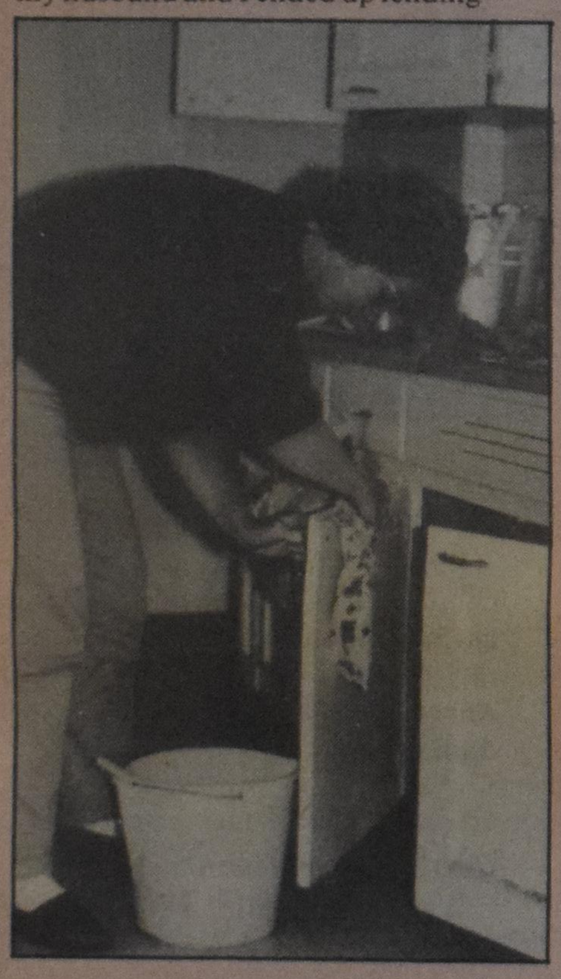


Photo: Bill Fledderus

Volunteer Marge VanGeest does something different with "a cup of cold water."

Martin and other church members had a hectic few weeks helping the Amayas settle in , familiarizing them with St. Catharines, getting them registered for school (one child in elementary, one in high school, and the parents in an "English as a second language" course), social security and the like.

A family of twelve

In total, Abel and Maria Luisa have seven children and three grandchildren (their children who have their own children are single parents). The young teens Iris and Juan have two older Toronto brothers who have applied as refugees and a single-parent sister who has been accepted as a landed immigrant — that leaves one older son (and child) in Dallas and an older daughter (and child) in El Salvador.

"Our sister in El Salvador is pretty safe, though," says Iris. "She lives in the western part of El Salvador, where there's not so much struggle going on."

Iris and Juan

Iris and Juan learned to speak English in a Dallas school. They do not remember any of the dangerous times in El Salvador but they have often been told about them.

"The trouble only started in 1978, you know," says Iris, who would have been two at the time. The two also know about death squads and "a lot of other stuff" that is going on in El Salvador.

Iris is in high school here, and Juan in elementary. Both say that school was harder in Dallas, and that here they are being taught things they already know.

They lived in Dallas almost seven years while their father wrangled with U.S. Immigration. During that time, Abel worked for various construction and masonry companies and his family was looked after by a Mennonite agency. Amaya has nephews in Dallas who also helped the family.

Juan says he is glad to be in Canada because in El Salvador he would probably have been forced to join the army when he turned 14.

According to Iris, her father does not like the "English as a second language" course he is taking, but her mother is more motivated and trying harder to learn English.

Juan concludes, "The weather in Canada is crazy."

"As part of the joint sponsorship agreement the church was given vouchers for free furniture, linens and household items."

Photo: Bill Fledderus

Refugee committee member Bert Witvoet picks up the basics at Kmart while the government picks up the tab.

tiptoe, says J.B. Phillips) the full manifestation of the children of God....For the creation itself has something to look forward to — namely to be freed from its present enslavement to disintegration. The creation itself is to share in the freedom, in the glorious and undying goodness of the children of God. For we know how the whole creation up till now has been groaning together with agony, in a common pain. And not just the non-human created order — even we ourselves.... We are also waiting for the transformation of our bodies and for the full experience of our adoption as God's children.

These words of Scripture also point to a shared redemption. A person is not an island, an individual, but can only exist in relation to other human persons and non-human realities and things, such as light, air, water, food, plants, animals. Human redemption must be seen as part and parcel of cosmic redemption. There is where the paradigm shift is to take place.

I can quite well understand that it is difficult to identify with the world around us and make its condition, its future, ours. Yet this is the case, as our health and that of the cosmos are intimately interwoven.

It matters what happens to Earth

The idea of a comprehensive redemption, the belief that human salvation can be understood only as an integral part of the salvation of the entire creation, is difficult to live, not only now, but also in earlier times. So it really was no surprise that quite soon in the history of the church another paradigm shift took place, away from Jesus' position.

Ever since Augustine we have taken redemption and applied it only to us as persons. Augustine's pre-occupation with human guilt and salvation has made us as Christians more interested in ourselves than in God or the fate of creation. We have established our entire ecclesiastical empires on that personal redemption premise.

This makes church reform extremely difficult if not impossible. The church has a vested interest in personal salvation and sees cosmic redemption as a threat. It seems to me that just as Freddie the frog, we Christians will keep on losing our relevance unless we re-define redemption, undergo a paradigm shift and start thinking differently about the way of salvation.

Why have we confined redemption to the personal level or advocated some sort of social gospel, limited to humanity only? Christianity has strongly been influenced by Gnosticism, which emphasizes that the soul only is to be saved and that the body and other material objects, whether living or non-living, have little to do with redemption in Christ. The Gnostic-Hellenic tradition expresses that it is quite correct to say that matter is without quality and that it is evil.

Although the Christian Reformed Church with its confession "Our World Belongs to God" has started to purge itself of this gnostic notion and has continued this in its new hymnal, most people who call themselves Christians, including the Reformed wing, still see this earth as a foreign strand, a wilderness waste. Christians almost everywhere say "Heaven is our goal, this earth not worth our dole."

The Gospel truth is that heaven is not our goal: the cosmos is. Almost all Christians sincerely believe that the body and all other material objects, whether living or non-living, do not participate in or benefit from the redemption of Christ. The consequences of this paradigm are that trees and rocks, animals and air are objects to be exploited, to be used and abused. Christian doctrine has encouraged this and that is *one* message the world has clearly adopted.

(Concluded next week)

Bert Hielema is a real estate appraiser who lives in Tweed, Ont.

Environment

How can we destroy an earth that belongs to God?

Ron Dube

While studying Japanese religions I was privileged to discover the haiku, a 17-syllable poem symbolizing the unity of humanity and nature in the ongoing stream of life. This glimpse into the value placed on nature shamed me into realizing my own ignorance and abuses of nature, creation and earth.

As a Christian accepting that God my Father had created my world how then could I explain my distance and separation with nature's heartbeat. In six days, the earth, water, trees, cosmos, fish and animals were created. On the seventh day God rested and man was unfortunately left in charge.

Using seven haikus I would like to reveal the destruction of earth by human beings. With each haiku representing one day let us travel back to "In the beginning" and, I hope, we can seek a new beginning to this ending.

7th Day: human beings
"Our Father" rested
in his image ran away,
prodigal children

6th Day: animals
hard steel traps soft fur
green dollars soaked in red
blood
a fashion statement

5th Day: fish
drift-net profits canned
overfish gone overboard,
extinction for sale

4th Day: cosmos
search for life spaced out,
Nasa's towers of Babel
clutter the cosmos

3rd Day: trees
clear-cut to Eden
fallen man felled the last tree,
chainsaw rests in peace

2nd Day: water
white river bleeds black
industrial waste — drip, drip
oceans and oceans

1st Day: earth
chilling her hot air
the ozone blisters open
earth evaporates.

In closing I quote Marian Van Til from "It's Not My Problem" (C.C., Oct. 25): "This is our Father's world. But he's given us the privilege of being responsible for it. Will he say when he looks at our 'dominion' and 'subduing' of his earth, 'Well done, good and faithful servant?' "

Ron Dube is a prisoner at Collins Bay Institution, Kingston, Ont.

Probing the mysteries of Canada's 'Stonehenges'

(Canadian Scene) — What mysterious archeological phenomena found in Canada are older than Stonehenge or the Pyramids and are largely unknown to the general public?

The answer is a series of boulder rings known as medicine wheels. Found scattered over the Great Plains of North America — including sites in southern Alberta and Saskatchewan — the rings have long intrigued archeologists and anthropologists as to who built them and why. Now a recent graduate of Simon Fraser University may have brought science one step closer to the answer.

"It's pretty much agreed that medicine wheels were built by prehistoric, bison-hunting tribes of the plains Indians," says Dr. David Vogt, who recently completed his PhD on the topic of medicine wheels.

Nobody know for sure when they were built, Vogt says, but the "best guess" is as much as 8,000 years ago. "That's before Stonehenge, before the Pyramids. And that makes them pretty interesting."

Since 1880, landowners and archeologists in the Great Plains area have identified about 150 medicine wheels, of which about 125 are in Canada, mostly in southern Alberta.

"There may have been a lot more, but they've either been destroyed or buried," says Vogt, noting that most lie in relative obscurity in fields or scrub. "Still, we expect that there are others out there waiting to be found."

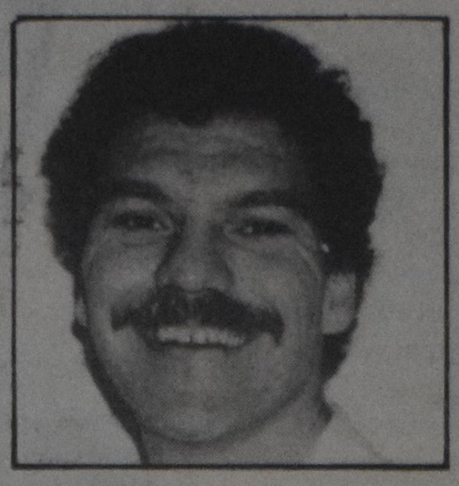
Astronomical implications

Medicine wheels are typically found atop high hills and river plateaus. Each consists of an outer ring of boulders in the centre of which is a pile of boulders. Lines of boulders reach from this pile to the outer ring, like the spokes of a wheel. The medicine wheels are usually between 10 and 40 metres across, but can be as large as 100 metres across.

"They're Canada's Stonehenges," says Vogt, "although they're not quite as impressive because there are no huge upright piles such as are found at Stonehenge."

Impressive or not, medicine wheels have one thing in common with Stonehenge and other European megaliths — they are at the centre of an ongoing debate over why they were built.

Vogt says 20 of the sites have entry-ways marked by two parallel spokes. "These are always oriented to the southeast," he says. "It's possible these were set up to observe the solstice sunrise or sunset."



Earthtenders

Our place and task in the environment

Harry Spaling

Canada's 'Green Plan': Unkept promises

The first anniversary of Canada's Green Plan went by almost unnoticed last month. This was a stark contrast to the hoopla surrounding its release a year ago. Perhaps the government hoped not to attract attention to its environmental promises which remain unfulfilled.

In December 1990, the Green Plan committed $3 billion over the next five years to more than 100 new government initiatives for managing and preserving Canada's environment. Within two months the federal budget watered down the government's financial promise to spending the money over six years.

The original plan lacked detailed information about specific actions to clean up and improve the environment. What precisely would be done? Where and when would it occur? How much would each action cost? The government promised to unveil details over the year.

Some progress has been made. About 35 Green Plan initiatives have been announced. Some $275 million over six years is to be spent on water and sewage treatment improvements on Native reserves. Companies involved in developing new technologies for pollution control and clean up are entitled to up to 50 per cent of the development cost from a $100 million fund.

Universities are to receive $50 million to train environmental scientists and carry out ecological studies. Another $30 million is being spent on a program to reduce smog in cities by the year 2005.

Has the one year old Green Plan resulted in cleaner air to breath, purer water to drink and more pristine wilderness to enjoy? Probably not; at least not yet. It will take time to reverse decades of pollution and resource depletion.

Bureaucratic entanglements

Many commitments in the Green Plan have yet to be fulfilled. Most importantly, the government still needs to act to get its own house in order. Procedures for environmental reviews of existing federal policies and programs, and ecological screening of new proposals approved by Cabinet still need to be announced. It must also still prepare a detailed "Code of Environmental Stewardship" that will serve as a guideline for all federal departments.

Eighteen new national parks are to be created by the year 2000, five of them by 1996. But there have been no announcements to set up any national parks. No new park has been established since 1988.

Other promises not met during the first year include a new "Drinking Water Safety Act," improved regulations to govern ocean dumping of industrial wastes, and funding for participants in environmental assessment hearings.

Many of the initiatives and much of the money are directed toward bureaucratic ends rather than direct environmental improvements. Some initiatives appear to serve other purposes. For example, the $100 million fund for companies to develop environmental technology was announced by the Minister for Science and Technology, seemingly as part of a business development strategy.

The basic flaw of the Green Plan is that it does not fundamentally alter attitudes or the way in which decisions are made about the environment in either the public or private sector. It assumes that Canada's environmental problems can be resolved by bigger bureaucratic programs and more dollars.

What is really needed is a new way of thinking about the environment. This thinking must recognize basic ecological ideas such as a finite supply of resources, and limits to economic growth which exceeds the ability of the environment to sustain or regenerate itself. Programs and dollars which promote this type of environmental stewardship are glaringly absent from Canada's Green Plan.

Harry Spaling is a doctoral candidate in geography at the University of Guelph, Guelph, Ont.

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Short story/Poetry

All in the same boat

Matt Nevisky

The following poem appeared in an issue of *The Jerusalem Post* a while back (with apologies to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow) and was submitted to *Calvinist Contact* by G.M. Stehouwer of Maple, Ont. The poem was occasioned by the finding of an old scow on the shores of Lake Kinneret. "Maybe our squabbling church members can learn something from this poem," writes Stehouwer.

By the shores of Lake Kinneret,
by the fast-receding waters
where St. Peter's fishes splashes
(perfect place to dunk Falashas!),
there, where once the higher water
of our nation's drinking fountain
covered picknickers' felafels,
plastic jugs for Coca-Cola,
candy wrappers, paper nappies,
tins and bottles by the mountain,
rests a *boat* of ancient vintage,
yes, a *vessel* in the mud there, by the shores
of Lake Kinneret by the fast-receding
waters.

"Jesus Craft!" proclaim officials
seeking Gentile-tourist business.
"Yes, the good ship *S.S. Jesus!*
Hordes will flock here with
their Nikons,
jam the dock to see the icons,
genuflect before the poop deck,
venerate the holy oarlocks!
Quick, let's build a hotel complex!
Combination shrine-marina!
Aquarium of the Apostles!
Lure the pilgrim and his greenbacks
(just as long as they aren't Mormons!)
to the shores of Lake Kinneret,
to the fast-receding waters!

"Take it easy," says the chief of
the Antiquities Department.
"By the jar we found within it
and the pottery around it,
we declare this ancient vessel
even ancienter than Jesus
by a hundred years or longer,
so hold back your Christian
pilgrims,
for it's sure the boat was Jewish,
likely just a herring trawler,
by the jar we found within it,
by the *matjes* herring in it,
by the shores of Lake Kinneret
by the fast-receding waters."

"Couldn't be!" cries the Herutnik,
interrupting him quite crossly.
"Must have been a fighting vessel
of the fledling Jewish navy
up against the Roman heathen!
There's no question that this galleon
symbolizes valiant warriors
like Bar-Kochba, Jabotinsky,
and the luckless martyred heroes
who sailed on the *Altalena*
(O, that blessed Etzel vessel!)
'cross the hostile Mediterranean
to the ambush just off Jaffa
by the gunfire of Ben-Gurion!"

"True, a symbol, but not Herut's!"
snaps an aide to Shimon Peres.
"Fishing boats are well-known
emblems
of the noble Jewish worker
who does Histadrut-type labour!
You'll recall we had a portrait
of a fishermanly hero
on our late, lamented lira!
Yes, the lira! Money netted
via sweat, not speculation,
long before New Economics,
shrinking shekels, bouncing
bank shares,
laisser-faire and other nightmares
you'll bring back with the rotation!"

"Actually, in our opinion,"
drones the Chief of Tora Sailors,
"you will note this wooden dinghy
comes complete with separate
seating.
Hence this ship suits Orthodoxy,
even it it's clam-encrusted.
Halacha, however rusty,
claims this Noah's ark for trusty
Admiral Burg, Shas or Morasha,
who'll erect a floating *kollel*
and a subaquatic *mikve*
and a vast deep-sea yeshiva
by the shores of Lake Kinneret,
by the fast-receding waters!"

"Just a cotton-pickin' minute!"
drawls a Ginnosar kibbutznik.
"May I draw to your attention
that this very boat you mention
lies washed up at our collective?"
"So sez you," shouts a moshavnik,
"but this beach belongs to Migdal,
we can charge this bark for parking!"
"Allah hu-akhbar!" cries *al-Fajr*,
"Phoenician men invented sailing,
and Sinbad the Semite sailor
with his Moslem crews was trawling
here in time beyond recalling,
till you Jews filched Falestina!"

Glossary: LAKE KINNERET — Sea of Galilee; HERUTNIK — member of the Herut Party, successor to the ETZEL underground which tried to bring the ALTALENA, an arms and immigrant ship into Israel in 1948; HISTADRUT — Labour Federation, HALACHA — Jewish religious law; SHAS and MORASHA — religious parties, KOLLEL — rabbinical college; MIKVE — ritual bath; AL-FAJR — Arabic newspaper in Jerusalem.

So each screams, and who can
bear it,
by the shores of Lake Kinneret
by the fast-receding waters,
left and right, religious, anti,
the Herutnik, the Mapainik,
the kibbutznik, the moshavnik,
Ashkenazic and Sephardic,
Jew and Arab, each fanatic
slings his mud and madly wrestles,
each one fighting for possession
of that antique wooden vessel
beached among the trash and
bottles,
by the shore of Lake Kinneret,
by the fast-receding waters.

Observing all, with gentle sighing,
stands an aged, white-robed sailor,
fully bearded, long flocks flowing,
who, while everyone is brawling,
steps aboard and ups the anchor,
points his oars towards the horizon,
raises sail, commences rowing
from the shores of Lake Kinneret
out toward far more placid waters.

"Look, our boat!" cries one
combatant
as he spies the craft departing.
"Hey, come back here!" call
the figures
scrambling on the muddy
beachfront.

"I've a message for your children,"
says the sad-eyed ancient mariner,
"and until you learn this lesson,
none of you may claim my rowboat:
We all sail a single vessel,
ancient, crowded, fragile,
weathered;
ships of state continue floating
only if you pull together,
keep an even keel, use reason,
don't make waves, respect your
brother,
Summing up: don't rock the
lifeboat!"
Shamed at last, all watch the
boat fade
from the shores of Lake Kinneret,
from the fast-receding waters....

When least expected

Hilda J. Born

At last I found time to see the doctor. It had been such a hectic week. There was haying, unexpected company and a farewell party for my friend. Tomorrow was packed with plans also. It was only a month till the children's wedding and there were so many things that needed to be done before then.

So when I walked into the doctor's office, he simply said, "We've looked at your blood tests and you should be in the hospital."

I countered with, "There is no bed; you know it's overcrowded. Besides, I've always coped."

He looked over the top of his glasses while writing on a long blue form.

"Can you walk across the yard to the hospital next door? Hand this form to the admitting nurse."

As I handed the blue form to the nurse I remembered the roast I'd put in the oven for the hay crew's supper. She handed me her phone. At the farm, Matt finally answered in the dairy, after our young grandson ran to get him. I asked them to tell Dad, who was out in the field, to please pick up the car.

"And Matt, don't forget to turn off the oven."

The night in the emergency ward was hazy. But in the morning I missed my toothbrush, hairbrush and Bible. When my husband came for the car he brought the brushes, but he couldn't find my Bible.

Probably it was still with the party leftovers after the "farewell" we'd celebrated yesterday. Before those party guests' arrival the Lord directed me to Psalm 125:2b: "So the Lord surrounds his people both now and forevermore." These words had helped my departing friend and were just what I needed now.

I missed the spiritual sharing with another believer. No one offered to pray with me. Regretfully I mused, "Why didn't I at least ask my brother Frank to pray with me when he came with gifts for my birthday?"

This experience has given me a wee glimpse of what it'll be like when the trumpet sounds for the Lord's coming. It'll happen when we least expect it. It won't matter who eats the roast or drives the car.

We'll wish we'd prepared ahead; that our everyday wardrobe contained more essentials. I thought it would've been nice to wear a different piece of jewelry for a change instead of the shoddy plastic in gaudy colours that I had on. To have nothing else to wear for a week except these tawdry things is not flattering. But my worst choice was shoes. Why did I choose the splitting, scarred, old pair of sandals? Now I was stuck with them until I was released. How I wished to slip into something cosy or stylish. I was embarrassed and my toes were cold. Too late I remembered our old Brownie motto: "Be prepared."

The Bible warns in Matthew 24:44, "So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come when you do not expect him."

Will he catch me off guard?

Hilda J. Born lives in Matsqui, B.C.

Education /Finance

Student self-evaluation part of new report card in Edmonton schools

Louisa F. Bruinsma

Marks and grades: The bane of every student. Curious classmates who ask, "What did you get?" and parents who measure success in terms of the final reckoning: the report card.

The Edmonton Christian Schools recently designed and printed a new report card. The card reflects an approach to evaluation that views students as participants in the process. All students write a self-evaluation on the card.

In the primary grades, help is given in the formulating and writing of the evaluation. Sometimes happy or sad faces tell the story.

Thinking truthfully

"I thought the self-evaluation was pretty neat," says Danny Tabak, Grade 8 student at East Edmonton Christian School. "You have to figure out how you did instead of how the teacher thought you did. And you have to decide what you are going to do about it. When you write it down yourself, you realize that instead of fooling around you could do more work.

It took a while to think about what to write down," he adds. "You don't want to put yourself down. You have to think truthfully about yourself."

The report card has the usual space for the parent's signature, but added is a place for the student's signature.

Where there is a need for a change in work habits, the card includes an action plan developed through consultation in a student and teacher conference. The student's signature on the report indicates the student has has not only been involved in the development of the action plan, but has also endorsed it.

"Eventually we would like to involve the parents as well as the students in the formulation of the written action plan," says Tena Siebenga, principal of East Edmonton Christian School and chairperson of the committee that designed the new report card.

Grading is subjective

The de-emphasis on grades developed because of a growing awareness by teachers that grading is very subjective and difficult, and that it is sometimes impossible to measure learning in an objective manner.

Parents at a Home and School meeting held recently at the North Edmonton Christian School had a chance to experience first hand the difficulty involved in establishing a fair grade.

Two descriptive essays on the topic of how an eagle cares for its young were distributed to parents for marking. Parents were given criteria in determining grades, e.g., grammar, spelling and word usage. One essay was very creatively written, but filled with spelling mistakes. The other essay had no spelling errors but lacked imagination and sparkle.

"Interesting to note was the total lack of consensus by parents on the grade," says North Edmonton Christian School principal Hans Van Ginhoven. "They differed widely. Some parents focused only on the spelling errors in the one essay and placed little value on the other language arts elements present.

"A debate developed among the parents. One would say, 'This one is more creative.' But another one would say, 'Yes, but he can't spell.' It became evident that a grade is not always the most appropriate way to evaluate a student."

Based on potential

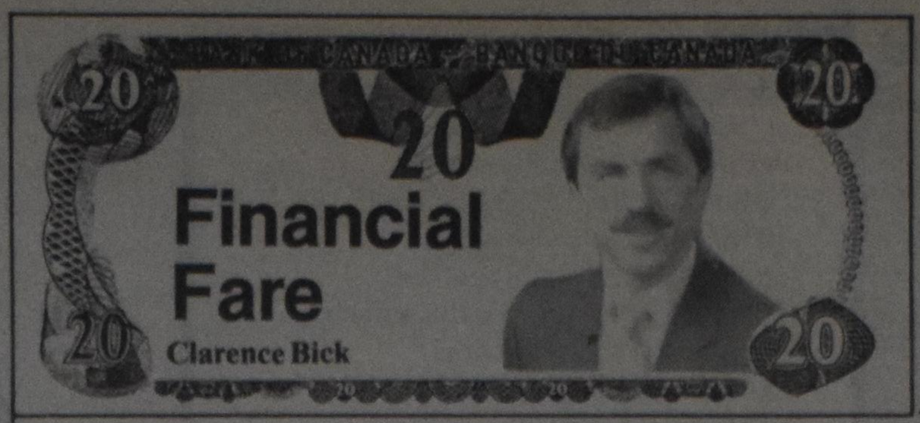
The new report card reflects this difficulty by eliminating letter or number grades for the primary levels and by limiting them to selected subject areas at the intermediate level.

"We wanted a form of reporting that would be consistent with our philosophy of education, one that would exemplify our understanding of teaching and learning practices," says Siebenga. "We felt that our reporting method should reflect our Christian philosophy of education."

"We did a lot of work looking at samples of report cards from different schools," says Joan Konynenbelt, teacher at East Edmonton Christian High School and member of the committee that produced the new card. "We tried to allow for individual differences. Students are evaluated on the basis of their potential. Their evaluation is not necessarily based on a scale with other students."

The Edmonton Christian Schools operate four schools with about 1,000 students: North, West and East Edmonton Christian Schools offer kindergarten through Grade 9 programs, and the Edmonton Christian High School offers Grades 10-12.

One of the basic tenets of the school's philosophy of education is that the child is made in the image of God. This report card treats students as active participants in the educational process. They are expected to take some responsibility for it. And ultimately, this process shows respect for the student.



Spending money — A primer for young people

Two weeks ago this column went through a philosophical discussion about the stewardship of our monetary resources. This week we will stick to a technical discussion on how to evaluate expenditures and get the most value out of each dollar.

This is not simply a way to get the most "bang for the buck" to maximize personal satisfaction. Instead, the better use of money should inevitably lead to surpluses and a personal evaluation of whether enough of our individual resources are being used for God's work.

Money management is — or should be — crucial to young people, in part because the economy they face is backwards. Incomes generally start low and climb over the span of a career, but costs are loaded onto the front end. In the early years, many young people buy houses and raise children. For much of the Reformed community, there is also the added cost of Christian education.

Typically, a person starting his or her first job has very small financial commitments. Even low wages leave a large amount of "discretionary income" when there are no costs associated with raising a family or paying a mortgage. This also holds for many married couples without children, even if they have a mortgage. The combination of two full incomes without the costs of children can leave a large portion of uncommitted income.

Making the wisest choices

The following is a conceptual approach to financial decisions you can use to make the best decisions for yourself.

My approach is based on a concept taught in introductory economics called "marginal utility." "Utility" is a subjective measurement of the usefulness of a good or service to an individual. "Marginal utility" refers to the relative usefulness or value of one more unit of a good or service.

Let me explain: Imagine you have been walking through the desert for the last three days with nothing to drink. The sun is beating down and you are near death from heat and thirst. You suddenly spot a lemonade stand. The person behind the counter holds a frosty glass out towards you (You can hear the lemonade swishing and the ice cubes tinkling), and asks, "How much is this worth?"

In this desperate situation that first glass of ice cold lemonade is worth a lot, perhaps thousands of dollars. Now, how much is the second glass worth? How about the third, tenth, or the twentieth glass? Ten glasses of lemonade is better than one glass, but each successive glass has less and less value relative to the previous glass. In other words, the "marginal utility" of each glass of lemonade is lower than the previous glass.

This concept can be applied to our current spending habits. For instance, if you are going out for supper, a $100 meal is nicer than a $25 meal. But the real question is whether, if you bought the $100 meal, you got enough value for the extra $75 expenditure. Could that $75 have given more satisfaction or usefulness elsewhere? Assuming the use of your money meets moral and legal standards, the marginal utility concept will help you judge various alternative ways to use your money, be it saving, charitable giving, or simply buying something you need or want.

Now or later?

The concept also holds for savings. People often assume that saving instead of spending means a lot of satisfaction has to be given up now so that a little extra satisfaction can be gained in the future. In many situations the opposite holds true — giving up a little bit now could yield much more satisfaction in the future.

Lets look at an example of a young couple, both working and earning a total of $60,000, and keeping $46,000 after taxes. They live in an apartment costing $500 per month. To just cover the basics like rent, groceries, etc., they could probably live on $20,000. Now, how much of the remaining $26,000 should be spent on discretionary items like entertainment, exotic vacations, fast cars, and the like? The answer depends on your own view of the following scenario.

A couple five years older lives in a house with a mortgage of $100,000. They have two children. The mother is working two days of the week. The household income is now $44,000 annually, leaving $36,000 after taxes.

While revenues are down, costs are way up. The mortgage is costing about $1,000 a month, and property tax, utilities and maintenance are adding another $300 per month. The total annual cost of housing is $15,600, which is $9,600 more than the apartment. According to a recent study, two young children cost $7,000 annually (at the low end of the scale).

Carefully consider what's at stake

Using the original $20,000 annual expense as a starting point, we can add an extra $9,600 in housing costs and $7,000 in costs for children. The total annual cost of living is $36,600. Out of the $36,000 after-tax income, there is not only no money left for discretionary spending, but cutbacks on things like new clothes will have to be made to cover the $600 shortage.

How do you apply this information if you currently have lots of discretionary income? For example, should you purchase that hot $30,000 sports car or should you settle for the $10,000 sedan? The sports car is more fun to drive, but that is not the issue. The question to answer is which use of the "marginal" $20,000 will give the most satisfaction.

The sports car is fun now, but if you save this $20,000 and reduce your future mortgage, you will save $2,000 in interest each year. This will give you an extra $2,000 a year of discretionary income at a point when there is no other discretionary income. The value to you of the extra discretionary money in the future is very high.

As you can see, this does not have to become a game of amassing wealth. In fact, this is dealing with a prime concern of many young people: how can I best enjoy this money? A useful exercise will be to imagine yourself 10 years older, looking back and asking yourself, "If I could make this decision again, what would I choose?" This will help you determine now which outlay gives you the most value. This column cannot give you the answer, but some careful thought on your part should go a long way.

Clarence Bick is a financial planner in Ancaster, Ont.

Education

Ontario government bows to public pressure:

Parental rights re: religion to remain in the Education Act

Bill Fledderus

TORONTO — The proposed removal of the only Ontario legislation concerning parental rights in public schools will no longer go ahead, the province's Education Minister Tony Silipo announced on Dec. 18.

The withdrawal is the result of opposition expressed by religious groups at protest meetings in Belleville, Kitchener and other cities, through hundreds of letters and through the lobbying of groups such as the Ontario Multi-faith Group for Equity in Education (OMGEE).

The move would have eliminated the rights of parents to have a say in the education of their children, according to Gerald Vandezande, government relations co-ordinator for OMGEE.

Silipo admitted that the proposed removal of Section 50 of the Education Act is obviously a sensitive issue and requires discussion and clarification. He announced that amendments to Section 50 have been removed from his present bill, Bill 125. The section may be dealt with in future legislation.

Any discussion of Section 50 will now have to consider the place of parental rights concerning the education of their children in public schools.

"In the future, the province may add a new clause to protect the rights of parents to be involved in their children's education," according to Keith Baird, a policy assistant to Silipo.

What is Section 50?

Section 50 dates back to before Confederation when it was legislated to protect the rights of religious minorities "to receive such religious instruction" as their parents desire. It also forbids requiring any pupil in a public school "to read or study...a religious book or to join in an exercise of devotion or religion objected to by his parents."

The Ontario Ministry of Education wanted the section removed in response to several recent court decisions based on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which ruled that the beliefs of the Christian majority could not be imposed on the non-Christian minority.

According to the Education Ministry, those decisions imply that public schools may only teach "about religion" and may not teach religious doctrines. Such an interpretation would mean that Section 50 is invalid and should be removed.

Christian groups and individual parents have pointed out that the Education Ministry's interpretation of those court decisions is going too far. They cite the opinions of a number of expert constitutional lawyers who find its interpretation to be erroneous.

"The court never said you can't have religious instruction. They just said you can't have *mandatory* religious instruction," says Vandezande.

During the debate, both OMGEE and another group, the Coalition for Relgious Freedom in Education, publicized their views that parental rights and responsibilities should be protected in law and that educational justice should be extended to all faith and value communities.

Ironically, the future of the rest of the educational "housekeeping" bill, Bill 125 (minus the amendments to Section 50), has now become unclear. The government could quickly push it through second reading or allow it to fall by the wayside and replace it with a fresh bill in the new year.

Calvin Seminary board meets for the first time

Robert VanderVennen

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — A highlight of the first meeting of the Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees was a commissioning service at which Rev. Calvin Bolt, president of the Christian Reformed Church's Synod 1991, gave the message and charged the new board.

The new board results from a decision of the recent CRC synod to separate the denomination's seminary from Calvin College, and thus also to separate the boards of the two institutions.

Allen Petroelje, a pastor, was elected to chair the new seminary board; Calvin Compagner, another pastor, became recording secretary; and educator Henk Hultink of Hamilton, Ont., was elected corresponding secretary.

The new board examined those qualities, responsibilities and levels of commitment required to do a responsible job of governing the seminary. A video on seminary trusteeship and a panel discussion by four trustees identified issues and themes in good trusteeship.

Because not every CRC classis now has its own seminary trustee, special attention was given to how regional representatives can best report to the churches.

In other action the board passed a motion concerning Rev. Steven Schlissel, of Messiah's Congregation, a CRC in New York City. He has repeatedly attacked the seminary and its faculty in public articles and speeches. The board wrote to Schlissel's congregation saying that if by December its pastor had not supplied the data the seminary had requested of him in September, the board would bring ecclesiastical charges against Schlissel. The board appointed a committee to prepare charges to be acted on in February if Schlissel does not either substantiate or withdraw his charges.

Bob Koole becomes third B.C. Christian school co-ordinator

Robert VanderVennen

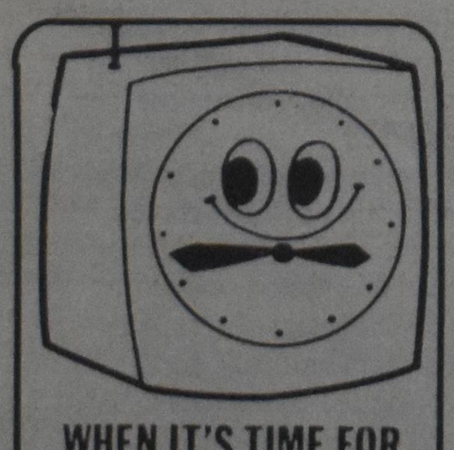
LANGLEY, B.C. — Bob Koole of Edmonton Christian High School has accepted an appointment to join John Vanderhoek and Lee Hollaar as an educational co-ordinator for the Society of Christian Schools in British Columbia.

Development of high school programs and curriculum resources with a distinctly Christian perspective will be one of Koole's major tasks. Rapid growth of the society, to 45 member schools enrolling 7,800 students, makes this appointment possible and desirable. The society has doubled in size in the past five years, says Sheila Burkinshaw.

Koole has taught and served as vice-principal at Edmonton Christian High School for 17 years. He holds a BA degree from Calvin College and MEd from the University of Alberta.

Koole expects to take up his new position in August 1992 after completing his current year of service as a member of the team at the Calvin College Center for Christian Studies, which this year is active on a project in the field of Christian schooling.

See next week's issue for Peter and Marja's answer to 'Troubled Friends.'



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Ian Taylor is a Toronto-based writer and researcher. A university graduate of London, England, he was for more than twenty years a research metallurgist in the laboratories of one of North America's corporate giants. He obtained patents for high-strength alloys, armor plate and a manufacturing process. A further five years were spent in television production where he became producer/writer for a science documentary series broadcast throughout the U.S. and Canada. This background has provided the speaker with a disciplined approach for sorting facts from fiction, the insight to reduce complex situations to simple principles, and the ability to convey the results in a clear and entertaining way. Ian Taylor may be contacted day or night at (416) 928-0155.

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Dear P & M:

Back in the spring of 1991, my wife and her best friend, Jane, went on a trip together to California. They took a room in Seattle at a hotel near the airport the night before flying south. During their stay at the hotel they met some of the hotel staff and had an enjoyable evening.

Two months later my wife and Jane invited their new friends to Canada to spend the weekend. Jane had room at her place for them. She is divorced and has two teenagers. On this particular weekend they were with her ex-husband.

Four Asian men from Seattle came up for the weekend. After a night of entertainment we met back at Jane's place. Jane felt comfortable with the situation and after awhile we went home leaving Jane with her four male guests. During the night, Andy, also divorced, and Jane slept together. This was the first time since her separation many years ago that Jane shared herself sexually with someone.

Since that time Jane and Andy (not their real names) have spent every other weekend together while her kids are with her ex-husband. On these weekends they share the same bed.

Jane is a member of our church. Her first marriage was a disaster. We give her a lot of credit for how she has managed to raise the children herself. She is dedicated to them and we know that she is a Christian.

Andy has a good job, treats Jane well and is liked by her children. The two of them attend church together in Seattle whenever he has a weekend off.

Since that first weekend whenJane and Andy slept together we have not felt comfortable with the situation. My wife has asked Jane if she has thought carefully about what she's getting involved in. She also made it clear that we do not agree with this sexual relationship. Jane reacted by saying, "I don't know what to do because I really do like Andy."

Last fall the four of us spent a weekend together in the hotel where Andy works. During the weekend Jane and Andy shared the room across the hall from us. By Sunday I felt so frustrated not knowing what to say or how to handle the situation. It didn't help to meet one of his Christian friends who made the following remark to Andy, "What is this I hear about you being in church this morning?" This comment made me think that it has been awhile since he attended church on his own. It's possible that he is doing this just to please Jane.

My wife is afraid of saying too much, thereby offending her and ending our friendship. We have also developed a friendship with Andy and don't want to endanger that relationship. But if we don't help and guide them, who will? Deep down we believe that it's even our Christian duty to share our concerns with her. Her parents have also asked us to talk to her because of their concern for the relationship itself and its effect on the kids. We don't want to judge her, but out of love to her we want to talk with her about the way we feel.

Jane has wanted to meet a nice guy for some time and the two of them get along very well. Please advise us in this difficult situation. We have the following specific questions for you.

1. Do you think the friendship will suffer because of our concerns and us talking to her?

2. Should we talk to her knowing that we are guilty of many sins ourselves, including sex before marriage? Who are we to tell her what is right or wrong?

3. Is a sexual relationship outside of marriage always wrong, even if both were previously married?

4. Should the fact that he is Asian have any bearing on the situation?

5. Should we or her parents talk to her?

6. If we are to talk to her, what should we say?

Dear Troubled Friends:

We will answer your questions in next week's column. Thanks for writing. You and your friends have preoccupied our thoughts since we read your letter. No doubt the rest of our readers will be giving your situation much thought and prayer in the week to come.

Write to: P&M
c/o Calvinist Contact
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of: Sam Da Silva, Ineke Brouwer-Parlevliet, Tom Zevl, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

The Bible and Islam
by Rev. Bassam Madany
($4.95 Canada / $3.95 U.S.). How to relate the gospel relevantly to the Muslim heart and mind. Also available — essays on Understanding the Middle East ($1.50).

Write:
The Back to God Hour
P.O. Box 5070
Burlington, ON
L7R 3Y8

Pro-life feminists:

The women's movement accommodates a fresh philosophy

Virginia Byfield

NANAIMO, B.C. — Feminists For Life is a name that strikes most women — feminists and pro-lifers alike — as a contradiction in terms. By no means, says Wendy Barta of Nanaimo, founder of Feminists For Life of Canada (FFLC), who considers herself a feminist in good standing and is also a convinced anti-abortionist. Last week the fledgling national organization held its first annual meeting, in Nanaimo, to elect a slate of officers and plan strategy. It faces, Mrs. Barta acknowledges, a formidable challenge.

The central problem is the fact that almost all feminists (of both the extreme and the popular variety) have come to regard abortion on demand as a self-evident necessity in the establishment of equality for women. "It isn't even discussed," she notes. "It's regarded as a given." But this is simply not true, in the view of Feminists For Life, whose aim is "to offer a return to the roots of feminism...which is a loving, nurturing response to human suffering" of all kinds.

"Our opposition to abortion *arises* out of feminist philosophy," declares the FFLC statement of objectives. Not only is abortion the ultimate denial of human rights, it also exploits and degrades women. Equality for women will be achieved only when they are accepted and accommodated as potential or actual mothers, the organization contends. Therefore it aims to provide a forum in which this issue can be discussed in an informative and rational way, and strategies developed "for gaining equality through our strengths as women, not at the expense of the rights, lives or property of others."

Founder Barta traces her own feminist convictions to a Women's Studies course she took at the University of Winnipeg while earning an education degree nine years ago. Although she says much of what she learned then still seems valid, she concedes she emerged with the notion that the only possible position on abortion was "pro-choice." It was not until 1988, after her daughter Melody was born, that she began to examine the question seriously, and concluded she had been misled and betrayed by feminist rhetoric.

The right to life itself is such a fundamental principle that it crosses all philosophical lines, she concluded. She became an active pro-lifer, but still did not find herself entirely comfortable in the anti-abortion organizations. "They seem to look at things solely from the child's point of view," Mrs. Barta explains. "The solution lies between men and women, and we must address the problems women have." Then she heard of Feminists For Life of America, founded in 1972 by two women who were expelled from NOW, the militant National Organization of Women, on account of their anti-abortion views.

The FFLA philosophy, as expounded in a book called *Pro-Life Feminism: Different Voices* (edited by Gail Grenier Sweet), struck her as answering most of the necessary questions. She wrote FFLA to ask about starting a Canadian organization, was encouraged to do so, and registered FFLC last year. Despite her involvement in other pro-life activities, and family responsibilities that included the birth of a son this year, she has been able to build up a mailing list of several hundred names, with contacts as far east as Ontario.

The purpose of last weekend's Nanaimo meeting was to accelerate the process and put FFLC effectively to work. The appeal so far has been through pro-life organizations. The response from pro-lifers is quite good, Mrs. Barta reports — after an initial blank silence, that is. "They see that it's a commonsense philosophy."

But the same cannot be said for the other side of the equation, she acknowledges. "A lot of what's out there now is not properly feminism at all — it's an aberration." So far there has been no reaction from the feminist ranks, aberrant or otherwise; they have not been approached. "I don't think Feminists For Life of Canada is quite ready to tackle that yet," says founder Barta.

Reprinted with permission from the Dec. 2, 1991, issue of British Columbia Report.

Still available!

CLASSIS NIAGARA'S 1989 REPORT ON SEXUAL ABUSE

In June 1992, the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church will act on a report that deals with the shocking results of a survey on abuse: namely, **Report 28**, authored by the "Committee to Study Physical, Emotional and Sexual Abuse." This report refers to Classis Niagara's preliminary study in 1989, which may be ordered from our office.

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c) Photographs sent by fax are *not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.
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Thanks

VANDER HOEK:
Mr. and Mrs. O. Vander Hoek of Abbotsford, B.C. wish to thank you for your cards, flowers and best wishes on the occasion of our 60th wedding anniversary, on Nov. 26, 1991.
To God be the glory, for his faithfulness shown to us.

ZIETSMA:
We wish to thank everyone for the many acts of kindness and expressions of sympathy received by all our families, in the recent passing away of our husband, father and grandfather, Fred Zietsma.
Tina Zietsma and family.

Births

VELDHOEN:
Dirk and Shelley are excited to announce the arrival of their beautiful daughter

KAYLA DAWN

born on Dec. 4, 1991.
First grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. Meerten Veldhoen of Woodbridge, Ont., and fourth grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. William de Peuter of Bradford, Ont.
Another great-grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. J. de Peuter, Sr., Mrs. H. Veldhoen, and Mrs. T. Stelpstra.
Thank the Lord for the precious gift of new life!
Home address: 128 Richvale Dr., Brampton, ON L6Z 4G4

Births

ZANDSTRA (nee Hogeterp):
"How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all" (Ps. 104: 24).
John and Bev thank and praise the Lord for the safe arrival of their daughter,

KATELYN SUZANNE

born, Saturday, Nov. 23, 1991, weighing 7 lbs., 6½ oz. A little sister for Brett (and Gregory - with Jesus). Katie is the fourth grandchild for John and Ellen Zandstra of Jarvis, Ont., the 21st grandchild for Susan Hogeterp, the 16th great-grandchild for Rika Zandstra, and the 12th great-grandchild for Ben and Elizabeth Hofland, all of Townsend, Ont.
Home address: R.R. #1, Jarvis, ON N0A 1J0

ZWART:
Dirk and Carol Ann thank God for the safe arrival of their second child,

MATTHEW DIRK PETER

on Dec. 7, 1991.
Matthew is a brother for Amanda, and he is the second grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. Syd and Joanne De Boer of Lynden, Ont., and the tenth grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. Edward and Janet Zwart of Grimsby, Ont.
Home address: 204 Orkney Rd., R.R. #1, Lynden, ON L0R 1T0

Anniversaries

1951 December 27 1991
With praise and thanksgiving to our Lord we, celebrate the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

REV. HENRY and MRS. COBY DE BOLSTER

We pray that the Lord will continue to bless you and keep you in the years to come.
With love:
Geri & Marty VanEngen — Guelph, Ont.
Bert & Jane De Bolster — Vineland, Ont.
Nelly & Andy Straatsma — Burlington, Ont.
Len & Elaine De Bolster — Mississauga, Ont.
Joanne & Jim Teeuwsen — St. Catharines, Ont.
and 15 grandchildren.
Home address: Redeemer College, Ancaster, ON L9G 3N6

On Jan. 8, 1992,

HERBERT and JOAN GOODHOOFD (nee Flach)

will thankfully celebrate, D.V., their 45th wedding anniversary.

Their children and grandchildren:
Herbert & Janet Goodhoofd — London, Ont.
Anthony & Rita Goodhoofd — Richmond Hill, Ont.

Open house and reception for family and friends will be held on Saturday, Jan. 18, 1992, from 3-5 p.m. at Holland Chr. Homes, Recreation Room, Trinity Towers.
Best wishes only.
Home address: #614, Hope Tower, Holland Chr. Homes, 7900 McLaughlin Road South, Brampton, ON L6V 3N2

Anniversaries

Congratulations to John and Willemina Kamphuis (nee Enserink) on the occasion of their 40th wedding anniversary!

Gorssel Grimsby
1952 January 18 1992
"As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24: 15b).
We joyfully celebrate the 40th wedding anniversary of Mom and Dad, Oma and Opa,

JOHN and WILLEMINA KAMPHUIS (nee Enserink)

We pray that God will bless you with many more happy years of marriage. You've been such a blessing to us.
Hank & Valerie Kamphuis — Alexandra, P.E.I.
Matthew, Nicholas, Mitchell, Amber
Gerald & Jane Kamphuis — Cross Roads, P.E.I.
Alissa, Martin, Kristopher
Joanne & Alan McIsaac — Mermaid, P.E.I.
Andrew, Joshua, Stephen, Michael
John & Heather Kamphuis — Sherwood, P.E.I.
Andrea, Carolyn
Bernadine & Klaas Gerrits — Kentville, N.S.
Rachel
Wilma & Ted Harris — St. Catharines, Ont.
Amanda
Tony & Ruth Ann Kamphuis — Smithville, Ont.
Christina & William Bezemer — Grimsby, Ont.
An open house will be held from 2-4 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 18, 1992, in the Fellowship Hall of Mountainview CRC, Grimsby, Ont. No gifts please but donations to the Shalom Manor Building Fund are always appreciated.
Home address: 9 Park Rd. S., Grimsby, ON L3M 2N8

Anniversaries

1952 January 4 1992
With praise and thanksgiving to our Lord we celebrate the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

PETER and SHIRLEY MANTEL (nee Andree)

May the Lord continue to bless you and keep you in his loving care.
With love from:
Harold & Christine Mantel
Jeff, Rich, Nicole
Doug & Eileen Nagtegaal
Rachel, Michael, Andrew
Arnold Mantel
Laurette Mantel
Desirée, Thomas
Carl & Darlene Mantel
Carla
Chuck & Sandra Mantel
Home address: 821 Brock Rd.
R.R. #2, *Dundas, ON L9H 5E4*

Garijp, Fr. Phelpston, Ont.
1947 January 9 1992
With joy and thankfulness to God, we are happy to announce the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents and Pake and Beppe,

JAN and AUKJE TJEERDSMA (nee Kloosterman)

"I will council you with my eye upon you" (Ps. 32: 8b).
With love:
Tjeerd (Sid) & Rose Tjeerdsma — Orangeville, Ont.
Lisa, Heather, Erica, John
Eelke & Jane Tjeerdsma — Phelpston, Ont.
Christina, John Peter, Jennifer, Edward
Alie & George Strampel — Stayner, Ont.
Jeremy, Elizabeth, Peter
Peter Tjeerdsma — Phelpston, Ont.
Symen & Anne Marie Tjeerdsma — Barrie, Ont.
Hannah, Nathan
Home address: R.R. #1, Phelpston, ON L0L 1P0

Obituaries

"The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised."
Marrum, Fr. Oshawa, Ont.
Aug. 31, 1911 Dec. 11, 1991
The Lord suddenly called home our dear husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather,

DIRK BYLSMA

while he enjoyed bowling with his team. Loved and greatly missed by:
Ann, his wife, and by his children:
Wybe & Jean Bylsma — Cobourg, Ont.
Betty & Bruce Henderson — Delta, Ont.
Wilma & Peter Hanemaayer — Springdale, Ont.
Coby & John Bruinsma — Edmonton, Alta.
Peter & Vivian Bylsma — Ottawa, Ont.
Amy & Jim Van Schagen — Blackstock, Ont.
(Theo Bylsma, his youngest son, died on July 15, 1991)
and by his 20 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren; sister Ymkje Elzinga of Ferwerd, Fr.; brother Taekele Bylsma of Marrum, Fr.; brother Steven & Audrey Bylsma, Red Deer, Alta.
The funeral service was held on Dec. 14, 1991, at the Hebron Chr. Ref. Church in Whitby, Ont.
Correspondence address: 100 Glen Hill Dr. S., Apt. 605, Whitby, ON L1N 8R4

Sept. 11, 1908 Dec. 13, 1991
The Lord took to his eternal home,

JOHANNES FRANCISCUS DREISE

after much suffering.
"Then will I go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight" (Ps. 43. 4).
Dearly beloved husband of Anje Dreise (nee Van Dyken).
Dear father of:
Simon & Dina Dreise — Chatham, Ont.
Grace & Marten Van Rooyen — Forest, Ont.
Maria & Dick DeJong — Hastings, Ont.
Albert & Alida Dreise — Dundas, Ont.
Beloved grandfather and Opa of 27 grandchildren and 34 great-grandchildren.
Sister-in-law, Mrs. Jane VanDyken.
The funeral service took place Dec. 16, 1991, at the First Chr. Ref. Church, Chatham, Ont., Rev. J. Wally Postman and Rev. Peter Mellegers officiating.
"The Lord is my strength and my song: he has become my salvation" (Ps. 118: 14).
Correspondence address: 104-40 Elm St., Chatham, ON N7M 6A5

"So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, for what is seen is temporary but what is unseen is eternal" (2 Cor. 4: 18).
On Nov. 20, 1991, the Lord in his infinite wisdom, called to himself in glory, his child,

SANDRA STEENBERGEN (nee de Graaf)

Beloved wife of Peter Steenbergen.
Loving mother of Karen, Donald, Lisa and Ken — all at home.
Sadly missed by her parents: Peter and Dorothy de Graaf of Goderich and by her sisters and brothers:
Evelyn & Dennis Fowler — Goderich
Joyce & Randy Bruce — Regina
Pat & Steve Hansma — Drayton
Diana & Jim Richardson — Newmarket
Gerald & Mary Joan de Graaf — Ladner, B.C.
Kevin de Graaf — Goderich
Loving aunt to 12 nieces and nephews.
Funeral service was conducted at the Chr. Ref. Church, Drayton, Ont., on Nov. 23, 1991, Pastor David Tigchelaar officiating.
Correspondence address: Peter Steenbergen, R.R. #2, Drayton, ON N0G 1P0

Miscellaneous

Miscellaneous

Send your questions to Peter and Marja c/o Calvinist Contact. Confidentiality is assured.

Classified

Obituaries

We express our heartfelt sympathy to our Executive Director, Rev. Al Dreise and his family with the death of his father,

MR. JOHN F. DREISE, SR.

We trust that your comfort lies in the knowledge of his arrival in glory.
Salem Christian Mental Health Association's Board of Directors.

On Sunday, Dec. 8, 1991, the Lord took into his heavenly home our dearly beloved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother

SUZANNA MEYER
(nee Witvoet)

at the age of 92 years.
Predeceased by her husband Roelof Meyer in 1954.
On behalf of her children:
Jane van Driesum Meyer
A. van Driesum — Prince George, B.C.
Carl & Betty Meyer — Nepean, Ont.
Catherine & Bill Tolkamp Meyer — Prince George, B.C.
Nine grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.
"Blessed are those who find their hope and their rest in their Lord."
This is what our mother was assured of, and we rest ourselves in that knowledge. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to the Chr. Ref. World Relief Committee, Box 5070, Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8
Funeral services were held on Thursday, Dec. 12, 1991, at 1 p.m., in the Chr. Ref. Church, Prince George, B.C.
Correspondence address: Bill and Catherine Tolkamp, 7002 Valleyview Dr., Prince George, BC V2K 4N3

The Council of the Covenant Chr. Ref. Church of Woodstock, Ont., herewith expresses their deepest sympathy to the family of

LEENDERT BASTIAAN NUGTEREN

who passed away on Nov. 30, 1991.
His sincere faith and deep concern for the church will long be remembered.
Robed in white apparel
Washed in Jesus blood
He now reigns in heaven
With the Lamb of God.
For the Council,
John H. Bergman, President
M. Klingenberg, Clerk

"Jesus said: 'I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die' " (John 11:25,26).
On Dec. 6, 1991, the Lord in his wisdom took home to himself to live with him

ENGELINA JOHANNA WIKKERINK

(nee Luimes)

in her 86th year.
Beloved wife of Jan Willem Wikkerink.
Pre-deceased by one grandson, Harold, in 1981.
Lovingly remembered by:
John & Anne — Cobble Hill, B.C.
Rudolf & Sadie — Cobble Hill, B.C.
Gerry & Hermien — Cobble Hill, B.C.
Henk & Gladys — Duncan, B.C.
Bill & Gert — Cobble Hill, B.C.
Johan & Dorothy — Cobble Hill, B.C.
Gerald & Anneke — Duncan, B.C.
Rita — Burnaby, B.C.
Loving oma to 26 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.
Correspondence address: P.O. Box 12B, R.R. #1, Cobble Hill, BC V0R 1L0

More Help Wanted & Events on page 19

Teachers

LACOMBE, Alta.: Central Alberta Chr. High School. God continues to bless this grade 10-12 high school with continued growth. We anticipate hiring **additional staff** for the 1991-92 school year. Our community is excited with the challenge and privilege of providing Christian education to Central Alberta area students. Consider joining this new high school. Specialists in the area of **Humanities and/or French** are particularly required.
Address inquiries/resumes to:
Jack Vanden Pol, Principal
Box 958, Lacombe, AB T0C 1S0
Phone (403) 782-4535

LACOMBE, Alta.: Lacombe Chr. School with approximately 330 students in K-9, located in Central Alberta, invites applications from teachers for September 1992. There is an opening in the **elementary grades** for a **music teacher.**
Applicants must qualify for Alberta teacher certification. Send resume to:
Wernart van Deventer
Principal
Lacombe Chr. School,
P.O. Box 1749,
Lacombe, AB T0C 1S0,
Phone: (403) 782-6531

LEDUC, Alta.: Covenant Chr. School; If you can provide leadership to an innovative and enthusiastic school community, apply for the **teaching principalship** at Covenant Chr. School in Leduc, Alta. (P-9, 168 students). We are looking for a dedicated, organized, creative team leader for the 1992/93 school year. If you wish to apply or want more information, please contact: Gayle Monsma, Covenant Chr. School, Box 3827, Leduc, AB T9E 6M7. Phone (403) 986-8353. Application deadline is January 15, 1992.

LETHBRIDGE, Alta.: Immanuel Chr. School in Lethbridge, Alta., is accepting applications for a **Junior High English** and **Social Studies** position commencing March 1, 1992, as well as applications for the 92/93 school term. Please forward all correspondence to:
Mr. H. Konynenbelt, Principal
802 6th Avenue North
Lethbridge, AB T1H 0S1
or call (403) 327-4223

PORT PERRY, Ont. : Scugog Christian School, an interdenominational school in Port Perry, Ont., invites applications for a **Teacher** and a **Teaching Principal** for the 1992/93 school year.
Openings are in the **primary and intermediate divisions.** Please address all applications and inquiries to:
Mrs. Peggy Michel
14080 Old Scugog Rd. Blackstock
ON L0B 1B0
Tel. (416) 986-5262

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Sid Vandermeulen

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Het vertrouwde adres.

Teachers

PORT PERRY, Ont.: Scugog Chr. School invites applications for a **Grade 4/5/6 combination position**, due to maternity leave, for the period beginning March 1, 1992, to the end of the school year. Address all applications and inquiries to:
Mrs. Peggy Michel,
14080 Old Scugog Rd.,
Blackstock, ON L0B 1B0,
Phone: (416) 986-5262

VANCOUVER, B.C.:
Vancouver Christian School, a denominationally diverse community currently offering Kindergarten through Grade 8, is planning to expand their junior high program and will require a **Grade 9** teacher for the 1992/93 school year. Persons with a strong Math/Sciences background in education with interest in teaching P.E., Art or Computer, are invited to apply.
Please direct enquiries to:
Ellen Visser
Junior High Program Co-ordinator
Vancouver Christian School
3496 Mons Dr. Vancouver
BC V5M 3E6
We will also require a full-time **Kindergarten** teacher beginning in mid-March, 1992 and a full-time **Grade 4** teacher beginning in late March, 1992. Please direct enquiries regarding these positions to **Ron Donkersloot, Principal**, at the address above.

WILLIAMSBURG, Ont.: Timothy Christian School (Canada) is in need of a **principal/teacher** commencing with the 1992/93 school year for its **elementary school (K-8).** Interested applicants should send a letter of application and a resume by Feb. 1, 1992, to:
TCS Search Committee
c/o Cora Beking,
R.R. #1 Oxford Station, ON
K0G 1T0
Phone: (613) 258-5396

WOODSTOCK, Ont.: John Knox Chr. School. We are inviting letters of application and resumes for a possible opening in the **intermediate division** for the 1992/93 school year. Experience and strength in **Science and/or French** would be an asset. Please contact:
Henry Tuininga, Principal
800 Juliana Dr., P.O. Box 243,
Woodstock, ON N4S 7W8
Tel. (519) 539-1492

Help Wanted

Positions available

Social service work — Mutual Support Systems, a network of rural group homes in the Niagara Peninsula for children experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties, invites applications for the position of **Child Care Worker.** The responsibilities of this live-in position include involvement in the educational programming of the residents, scheduling daily routines, as well as planning special events, all in a family setting. In-service training provides an excellent opportunity for personal growth and skill development at role modelling positive relationships and facilitating the resident's successes. Position includes salary and benefits package. Position commences in January. Please submit resume to
Personnel Manager
Mutual Support Systems
R.R. #1, Perry Rd., Wellandport
ON L0R 2J0
Tel. (416) 899-2311

Help Wanted

TEACHERS/SOCIAL WORKERS

Considering a career change? We are seeking a

YOUTH WORKER

to provide leadership in organizing youth programmes, counselling young people, teaching catechism, and leading occasional worship services.
Several years experience in related work is preferred; ordination is not required.
Salary dependent on experience and qualifications, but in $35,000 - $48,000 range.
Address inquiries to: **Immanuel CRC, c/o G. Bloemendal, 19 Wheatfield Rd., Brampton, ON L6X 2V4**

CHRISTIAN REFORMED WORLD MISSIONS CANADA

(Burlington Office)

invites applications for the position of

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR

This is a full-time position with responsibility half-time to the Director of CRWM Canada and half-time to the Director of CRWRC Canada.

The gift of administration, organizational skills, and training and experience in office administration and functions, including word-processing skills, are valued.

Send inquiry and resume to:
Director, CRWM Canada,
3475 Mainway, Burlington, ON L7M 1A9

SEEKING A FULL-TIME PASTOR

Christian Reformed Church
Fruitland, Ont.

(30-minute drive from Niagara Falls)

is seeking a **full-time pastor** with full responsibility for the ministry of the church, beginning **July 1992.** We are a stable, loving congregation. A church profile is available upon request.

Please send inquiries and resumes to: **c/o J. DeGelder, 4 Brajer Court, Stoney Creek, ON L8G 4G9,** or **call Search Committee Chairman John Bergshoeff at (416) 945-4111.**

ADMINISTRATOR REQUIRED

Full or part-time **Administrator** required for **Mount Nemo Lodge Nursing Home** in **Burlington, Ontario.** This home is owned and operated by members of the **Canadian Reformed Society for a Home For the Aged Inc.**

Mount Nemo Lodge is a 60-bed accredited Christian nursing home licensed by the Ministry of Health as an extended care facility.

Experience in long-term-care management and/or LTCOM certificate from the Canadian Hospital Association an asset. Applicants with additional or other qualifications will also be considered.

For information, call Leo Knegt, Chairman of the Board, at (416) 689-7226 or fax # (416) 689-8591. Applicants must forward resumes no later than **January 30, 1992,** to above fax number or mail to:

c/o Mr. Jack Poort, Secretary
1131 Fisher Avenue
Burlington, ON
L7P 2L2

Classified/Events

Help Wanted

Challenging Opportunity

YOUTH DIRECTOR

The **Richmond CRC** is located in a rapidly expanding suburb of the beautiful coastal city of Vancouver, B.C. We are an established, active and caring church seeking a self-motivated, committed Christian to serve in a full-time unordained position as **Director of Youth Ministries.**

You should have a strong desire to share the love of Christ in ministry to junior-, senior- and post-high school youth and young adults, encouraging them to make commitments to live decisively for Christ and to be faithful and active in His church. You should be in basic agreement with the Creeds and Confessions of the Reformed faith. If you have engaged in courses of study for Youth Ministry or have equivalent and satisfactory experience and would like more information, please contact **John Smit at (604) 271-0283 or Pastor John Ooms at (604) 277-2326.**

Resumes may be sent to:
YOUTH DIRECTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE
Richmond Christian Reformed Church
6500 Maple Road
Richmond, B.C. V7E 1G5

Brampton Second Christian Reformed Church

requires a

YOUTH PASTOR

(ordained/unordained)

to develop programs to challenge our youth to active participation in the Christian life.

Education, training and experience in youth ministry are desirable.

Excellent employment and housing benefits will be provided. More information and a church profile are available upon request.

Resumes can be sent to:

the Search Committee, c/o Joe Grootenboer
9 Willis Dr., Brampton, Ontario, L6W 1A8
(416) 450-6796

Calendar of Events

Jan. 5	Dutch service with Rev. Peter Van Egmond, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster**, Ont.
Jan. 16	Public forum on "Stewardship, the environment and the economy." Speakers: David Hallman and Gerald Vandezande. At 8 p.m., Ewart Angus Hall 1A1, McMaster University, **Hamilton**, Ont. Admission free.
Jan. 24	Chamber music concert with Joachim Segger, Monica Rist, instrumental ensemble and the King's College Chamber Choir. At 8 p.m., West End CRC, **Edmonton**, Alta.
Jan. 25	Concert by Jan Overduin, organ, and Eric Schultz, trumpet, at 8 p.m., St. Paul's Presb. Church, **Port Hope**, Ont.
Jan. 25	Pioneer Clubs Leadership Conference, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Community Pentecostal Church, **Orleans**, Ont. Call (416) 681-2883.
Feb. 14-16	"Serving Christ in the Nineties III" conference at Bolton Conference Centre, **Bolton**, Ont. Keynote speaker: Dr. N. Wolterstorff on "Flourishing in Community." For info. call (416) 825-3578.
Feb. 28 - March 1	Salem Marriage Enrichment Weekend, with leaders Herman & Betty Vanderburg. At Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre, **Niagara Falls**, Ont. For info. call Salem at (416) 528-0353.

Pigs aren't...pigs!

"There is nothing a pig loves more than a good bath, with a loofah [sponge] and plenty of soap flakes.... There is something delightfully lovable about a really clean pig, in clean yellow straw."

Animal lover and famous dog trainer Barbara Woodhouse in Talking to Animals, *1954, collected by G.F. Lamb in* Animal Quotations, *Longman, 1985.*

Church news

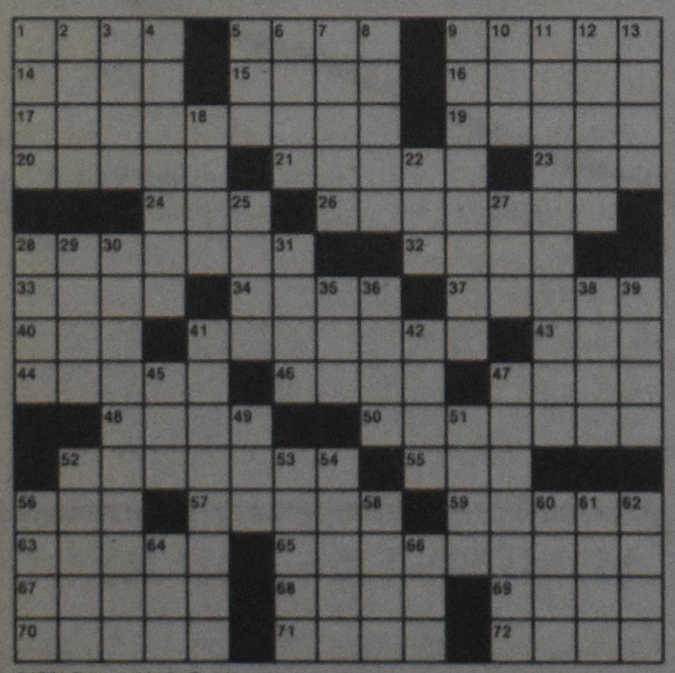
Christian Reformed Church

Address change

— Rev. Anthonie and Mrs. Ann Vanden Ende, 3 Elgin Place, Strathroy, ON N7G 3X6; phone: (519) 246-1705.

Weekly puzzle

by Dorothy B. Martin



ACROSS
1 Motels
5 Rat—
9 — bull
14 Convene
15 Cummerbund
16 Cottonwood
17 Hit the silk
19 Old TV fare
20 Shop
21 — firma
23 Enzyme suffix
24 Dynamite
26 Abundantly supplied
28 Stimulus
32 Aspersion
33 Sign of sorrow
34 Machete
37 Having uneven edges
40 Swiss river
41 Sunshade
43 Scull
44 Camel's cousin
46 A Guthrie
47 Guam harbor
48 Golfers' goals
50 Aristotle —
52 Playhouse
55 Linkletter
56 Vehicle
57 Herd
59 Hanging tapestry
63 Violin name
65 All-important
67 Mex. money
68 Ancient Asian country
69 Cattle old style
70 Sharp crest
71 Remainder
72 Shroyer of TV

DOWN
1 Sprites
2 Terrific
3 Pianist Peter
4 Beginner
5 Ember
6 On edge
7 Fall bloom
8 At that place
9 Comparison
10 Brew
11 Some military men
12 Entertain
13 Solitary
18 Penny
22 Speed abbr.
25 Brass instrument
27 Continent: abbr.
28 Kind of print: abbr.
29 Repast
30 Reword
31 Rail bird
35 Roman household god
36 Nor. city
38 Hindu garb
39 Geologic periods
41 Blissful place
42 Mrs. Chaplin
45 West of films
47 At — (immediately)
49 Passenger ship: abbr.
51 Ancient Syria
52 More docile
53 Cowboy at times
54 Dodge
56 —pie (from head to foot)
58 Cupid
60 Destroy
61 Part of A.D.
62 Fr. holy women: abbr.
64 Toddler
66 Total: abbr.

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Last week's puzzle

S	M	O	L	T		O	R	B	S		C	A	S	A
T	E	P	E	E		M	E	A	T		O	A	T	S
A	N	E	A	R		A	S	I	A		T	R	O	T
B	U	N	K	E	R	H	I	L	L		T	O	R	I
				T	E	A	S		I	R	O	N	E	R
J	A	B	B	E	R		T	E	N	O	N			
A	G	E	E		U	R	S	A		I	T	E	M	S
M	U	N	D	A	N	E		S	O	L	A	R	I	A
S	E	T	O	N		A	T	E	F		I	A	M	A
			F	I	E	R	Y		F	I	L	L	E	R
S	N	A	R	L	S		R	E	A	D				
T	O	R	O		C	R	A	D	L	E	S	O	N	G
I	R	I	S		H	A	N	G		A	L	G	E	R
E	S	S	E		E	R	N	E		L	O	R	N	A
S	E	E	S		W	A	Y	S		S	T	E	E	D

Renewal of Canada Conferences

Be informed. Be a part of Canada's Constitutional Reform.

In January and February, 1992, five Canadian institutes will host conferences to talk about the Government of Canada's constitutional proposals. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss key areas of constitutional reform and to provide Canadians and their governments with fresh insights into the challenges facing the country.

CONFERENCES

Topic: DIVISION OF POWERS
Location: Halifax, Nova Scotia
Date: Jan. 17 - 19
Organized By:
Atlantic Provinces Economic Council

Topic: ECONOMIC UNION
Location: Montreal, Quebec
Date: Jan. 31 - Feb. 2
Organized By: **C.D. Howe Institute and The Institute for Research on Public Policy**

Topic: INSTITUTIONAL REFORM
Location: Calgary, Alberta
Date: Jan. 24 - 26
Organized By:
Canada West Foundation

Topic: IDENTITY, RIGHTS and VALUES
Location: Toronto, Ontario
Date: Feb. 7 - 9
Organized By:
The Niagara Institute

CONCLUDING CONFERENCE
Location: Ottawa, Ontario Date: Feb. 14 - 16

GET INVOLVED

- **ASK FOR BACKGROUND MATERIAL ON THE PROPOSALS**
- **FOLLOW THE COVERAGE ON TELEVISION**
- **READ THE CONFERENCE SUMMARIES**
- **APPLY TO BECOME A CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT**

WHO WILL ATTEND?

A broad and balanced cross-section of Canadians, reflecting the make-up of the country, will participate.

Invitations will be extended to members of the Special Parliamentary Joint Committee on a Renewed Canada and to specialists in constitutional reform, as well as representatives from the federal political parties, the provincial and territorial governments, business, labour, and non-governmental organizations.

Members of the public can also apply to participate in any of the first four conferences.

HOW TO APPLY TO PARTICIPATE

Canadians, age 18 or over, can send a one-page letter in the official language of their choice, including:

- your full name
- the address and telephone number where you can be reached Jan. 3-6.
- a few paragraphs describing your knowledge of and interest in constitutional issues and your record of community service

Write your return address, and the name of the conference you wish to attend, on the top left hand corner of the envelope.

Mail your letter to: Applications—Constitutional Conferences, P.O. 1888, Postal Station "B", Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1B4.

Application Deadline

A limited number of spaces are available. Your application must be received by 5 p.m. on January 3, 1992.

Selection Process

A limited number of participants will be randomly selected from the applications received. If your name is selected, you will be telephoned by January 6.

Travel Arrangements

The personal expenses of participants will be paid "on request", to ensure that costs are not a barrier to participation.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CALL:

1-800-567-1992

English- and French-speaking operators—10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. (local time)

APEC atlantic provinces economic council / Conseil économique des provinces de l'Atlantique

C.D. Howe Institute / Institut C.D. Howe

CANADA WEST FOUNDATION / LA FONDATION CANADA WEST

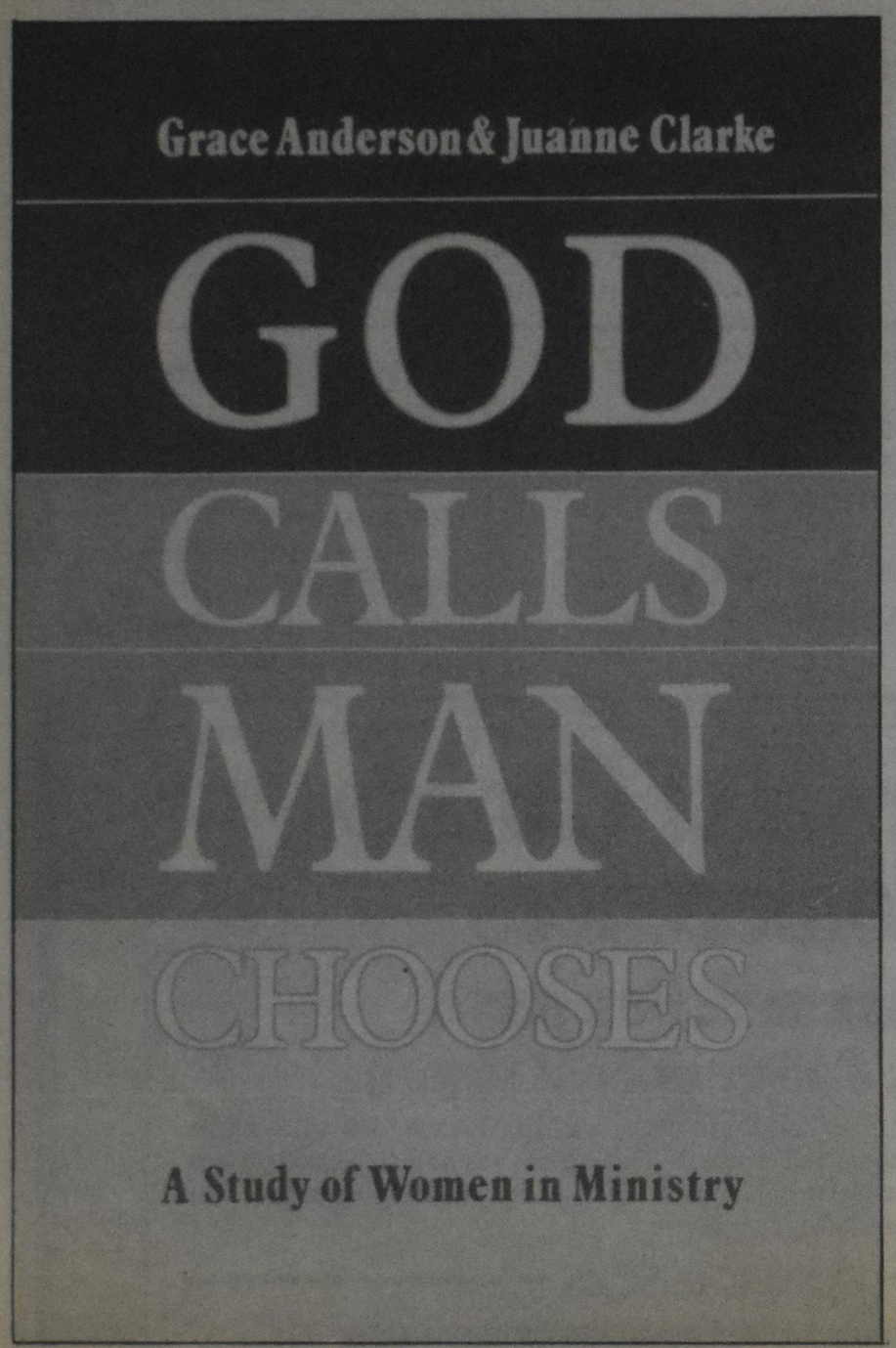
The Niagara Institute / Institut Niagara

The Institute for Research on Public Policy / L'Institut de recherches politiques

Books

Robert VanderVennen, page editor

Pitfalls and joys experienced by women ministers



God Calls: Man Chooses: A Study of Women in Ministry, by Grace Anderson and Juanne Clark. Burlington, Ont.: Trinity Press, 1990. ISBN 1-55011-140-X. Softcover, 167 pages, $26.95. Reviewed by Nell De Boer, Willowdale, Ont.

While some of us Reformed people are still debating whether or not women may serve in the full ministry of the church, this book is at the next stage, namely, what happens when women are serving in all offices of the church.

This book is based on a comprehensive study undertaken by the authors, both dedicated Christians and professors of sociology and anthropology at Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ont. Lengthy questionnaires (included in Appendix I, along with the results) were sent to the women who graduate from several Toronto School of Theology seminaries, namely Emmanuel, Knox, Trinity and McMaster, as well as Ewart College and the Centre for Christian Studies.

These institutions represent the United, Presbyterian, Anglican and Baptist churches and are training centres for diaconal and ordained ministries. Findings from a pre-test with women graduates of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon are included, as well as information from much correspondence the authors engaged in with the denominations regarding "a multitude of queries about denominational matters." It is evident that the authors have read widely in the area of women in ministry.

That the ministry of women in these denominations is much appreciated is no secret. This study, based on personal experiences, focuses more on what happens to ordained women once they have begun their work. Ministering as women in a male-dominated structure has its own unique joys and sorrows. The study seems to bring out more of the latter.

The earliest women to be ordained, some of whom had worked in diaconal ministries for a long time, have adapted more readily to the system than some of the more recent graduates. This is in part due to the greater recent recognition of unique feminine qualities and emphasis on utilizing women's own giftedness, rather than being pushed into a male model of ministry. Fitting into the hierarchical structures that are still so prevalent in many churches, and having no voice in them, is a concern for many clergywomen. Most view a model of servanthood and empowering the laity as a far more biblical and Christ-like model for ministry.

Probably more women than men in the ministry end up leaving the pastorate for other forms of ministry, and there are good reasons for this. Some of the difficulties women face in church ministry arise from tension between their roles. Few earn enough to afford the luxury of a full- or part-time person at home, as most clergy men have, and yet they are expected to do just as much, and often more, to prove themselves.

Even those on part-time staff found they put in at least 40 hours, yet were paid a half salary with no benefits. In our society it is still the women who are ultimately responsible for children and aging parents.

It should not be surprising that quite a number, especially among those married with a family, end up in the field of education. They find many opportunities to exercise their ministry skills and gifts and have the advantage of regular hours, income and benefits. But those involved in the educational and diaconal ministries of the church also have the feeling of being second-rate staff, merely following orders, with little opportunity to exercise their gifts and skills.

Sexism, or negative attitudes and/or behaviour based on gender, is all too common in our society, and is reflected in our seminaries and churches. Many of these women in ministry have experienced verbal and sexual harassment, most commonly from their male colleagues, often at clergy gatherings.

While this study focuses on many of the difficulties experienced by women in the ministry, one is by no means left with the feeling of discouragement. Going it alone as a clergywoman can be devastating, however. Most find support and encouragement from other women in ministry, from parishoners, and from their husbands, especially if they are also ministers.

Most of the women who responded to God's call and for whom the doors to Christian service were opened rejoice with one another and say, "What a glorious time to be alive." They feel a connectedness with the women in the ministry of the New Testament and certain periods of church history; they count it a privilege to minister on Christ's behalf and to help other women find ways of ministering to a hurting world. They believe it is too late now to close the door: Too many have seen the vision and they will not be silenced."

Friends of God

Wayne Brouwer

Leviathan

"There the ships go to and fro, and the leviathan which you formed to frolic there" (Ps. 104: 26)

Can God create a stone too big for him to move?

Remember the questions we used to ask the minister in order to stump him, or at least get him off the topic?

Theological absurdity is always a game. Sometimes it keeps people from facing their inner selves by diverting attention. That's what the Pharisees kept doing with Jesus. And the woman at Jacob's Well in Sychar (John 4) tried the same thing.

God at play

But what if theological absurdity is sometimes just God having fun. An eternity is a long time to while away without a bit of merriment now and again, wouldn't you say?

Somehow the songwriter of Psalm 104 seems to give that impression. The dazzling array of wildlife about him is almost like God's play-yard, filled with pets and treasures and secret hiding places. And that's especially true when he mentions "Leviathan" in verse 26: "There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number...and the leviathan, which you have formed to frolic there."

Hollywood horror

Do you know what a "leviathan" is? If you watch scary thrillers you probably know Hollywood's version — the mean, mutating, half-human sea creature that terrifies underwater explorers.

Actually, the biblical version of Leviathan isn't all that different. Listen to what the prophet Isaiah says about him: "In that day, the Lord will punish with his sword.... Leviathan the gliding serpent, Leviathan the coiling serpent; he will slay the monster of the sea" (27: 1). There's almost enough there to cast images for a dozen new movies!

Job hints at something of the same. After enduring all of the many blows that rob him of possessions, family and health, he curses the day he was born. He compares the blackness of his situation to the awful horror awaiting "those who are ready to rouse Leviathan" (Job 3: 8). Leviathan seems to be a child's worst nightmare, still lurking in the adult subconscious.

A number of ancient civilizations told legends of Leviathan, the great monster of the deeps, subdued early in history by the gods but biding his time for a great eruption of bloody vengeance. That picture isn't far from Scripture, either, in Job's or Isaiah's poetic terrors, or in the images of Revelation where the Beast from the Sea and the horrible Dragon (chs. 12 & 13) rise in one last vicious attempt to lay waste the Kingdom of God.

God's pet

But here's Leviathan the pet. And God himself expands on this brief theme in his thunderous speech to Job (ch. 41). Leviathan stirs the depths like a boiling cauldron. He snorts fire and belches smoke. His eyes blaze like laser beams and his cry of laughter smashes ships. But Leviathan is tamed by the Lord Almighty, led around on a leash like a pet, and ridden in playful frolic on the waves of the ocean.

Why did God make Leviathan? How fierce a creature, terrorizing every human dreamer in his or her uneasy world of nightmares! How horrible a picture of Satan and his devilishy destructive powers! And yet how charming a pet, playing like Flipper the dolphin with the Almighty through the rolling seas!

Why did God make Leviathan? I don't think I would have thought much about this "theologically absurd" question if I hadn't been camping one cold summer's night high on an Alaskan glacier with an elder from the Trinity Christian Reformed Church in Anchorage. Surrounded as we were by the incredible immensity of the mountains (with boulders too big for anyone but God to lift) by the strange and delicate wildlife, and by the incredible glacial ice pack, that elder read Psalm 104 with echoing resonance. And in that high and strange place creation suddenly became the playground of God. I only wish I had brought my binoculars. I'm sure I could have caught a glimpse of the distant ocean boiling as Leviathan and God frolicked in energetic abandon there on the high seas.

Wayne Brouwer is a pastor at First Christian Reformed Church in London, Ont.